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*A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield*



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*Peggy Boyer Long*



## **Our annual environment issue will encompass art and culture**

by Peggy Boyer Long

**N**ine summers ago, we published the first of what would become an annual issue devoted to Illinois' natural environment. With this edition, we aim to start a new tradition.

Each summer, we will assess the evolving relationship between nature and culture in an annual environment and arts issue. We think this is (excuse the expression) a natural next step. After all, our environment is, and always has been, a social construct. It is how we perceive it to be, how we see it or don't see it, and how that has changed over time.

In this issue, we continue to report on efforts to preserve our land, air and water, but we take a look, as well, at the relationship between our wild places and our built spaces. We explore the ways in which we see and don't see nature, and the ways in which we see and don't see the impact we have on it.

Stephanie Zimmermann reports that conservation activists worry Illinois is

losing the battle to preserve open spaces, that this state is "falling behind its neighbors in its commitment to acquiring and managing undeveloped land."

Environmental historian Robert Kuhn McGregor returns to one of his favorite subjects, the past and future of our inland freshwater seas, the Great Lakes. He teases out the

"ominous scientific fact" that even Lake Superior — so cold it breaks steel ships and buries their dead in icy graves — is beginning to succumb to global warming. But he's moved beyond reasons to results. "The fact that a warming Superior will severely impact weather patterns, influence navigation, alter habitats and affect the supply of a fundamental source of fresh water is more than enough to think about," he writes. "Climate change is occurring, and we should at least try to mitigate the consequences, rather than blundering along, praying that our blind faith in an unchanging natural world is well founded."

Settled scientific consensus also provides the starting point for Statehouse reporter Aaron Chambers. He reviews public perceptions of global warming and arrives at a discouraging assessment. "The news media," he writes, "has helped perpetuate skepticism about human-made global warming by tracking down — and

*Photograph by Wes Urschel, courtesy of the American Institute of Architects Chicago*



*Crab Tree Farm in Lake Bluff is a former dairy that was restored as a cultural and arts center. It was designed in 1911.*

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balancing stories with — comments from a diminishing pool of skeptics.”

In an effort to meet professional journalistic standards — and this is our own assessment — the media has fallen short on its primary mission to inform the public.

Yet that has begun to change, Chambers concludes.

James Krohe Jr. tackles a more fundamental issue: how we perceive nature itself. We are prone to project onto it our desires and fears — likely it's in our nature to do so.

His analysis that attitudes about sex have historically been reflected in how we see the flora and fauna in our backyards and on PBS nature

specials might not surprise. But his argument that there is a relationship between battles over protecting our ecology and our borders might.

“There is an unmistakable echo of nativism of the social, human kind (no doubt unconscious),” he writes, “when non-native plant species are described.”

We can promise you this: Krohe's essay is, as always, a thoughtful and interesting read.

And we hope the same can be said of this first environment, arts and culture issue. □

Peggy Boyer Long can be reached at [peggyboy@aol.com](mailto:peggyboy@aol.com).

## Great Lakes Basin Conservation pact is before legislatures

This spring, Illinois lawmakers agreed to give the governor authority to enter into a compact negotiated by eight states that is designed to begin to conserve water and natural resources in the Great Lakes Basin, which includes the St. Lawrence River in Québec.

The plan, which took years to craft, was spurred by the threat that mass amounts of water from the basin might be diverted and shipped across the globe.

A parallel non-binding international agreement was signed with Ontario and Québec.

The Great Lakes-St.

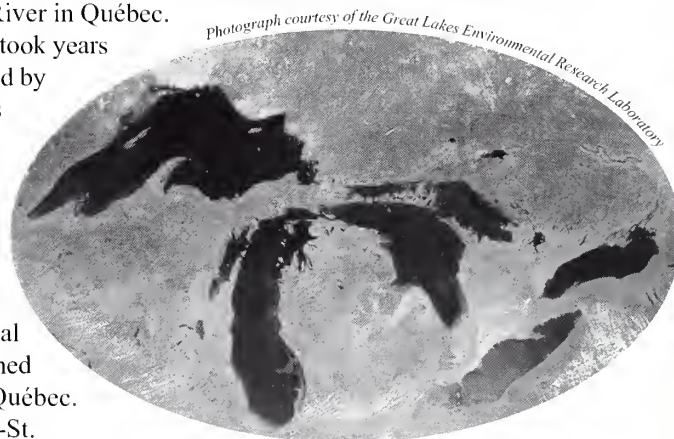
Lawrence River Basin Water Resources

Compact has the least impact on Illinois because the U.S. Supreme Court authorized the diversion from Lake Michigan used to reverse the flow of sewage in the Chicago River.

However, the plan requires the states to monitor in-basin uses and diversions out of the basin. New diversions will need to be evaluated under a regional standard. Further, the states must create water conservation plans.

The draft was agreed to by Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Before the plan can take effect, it must be approved by all eight of the states' legislatures and Congress. As of mid-June, Minnesota was the only state that had ratified the plan. Illinois was the only state to get sign-off in both chambers. New York had achieved passage in one chamber. Indiana and Michigan had pending measures.

For the latest status of the compact, go to [www.greatlakeswaterwars.com](http://www.greatlakeswaterwars.com). For the historical and political context, read *The Great Lakes Water Wars* by Peter Annin and the essay by Robert Kuhn McGregor in this issue. □





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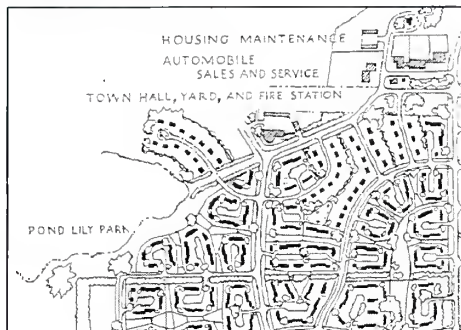
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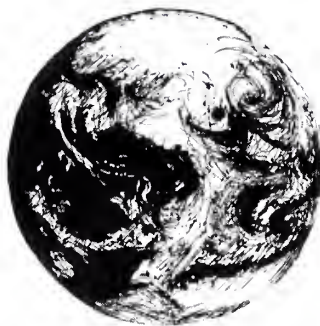
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*Credits: Our cover photograph of Chicago's Garfield Park Conservatory comes to us courtesy of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and the American Institute of Architects.*

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Bethany Carson



## **Lack of federal action could create a patchwork of local immigration policies**

by Bethany Carson

The week the Village of Carpentersville in northern Kane County was scheduled to vote whether to make English the official language for village operations, immigration policy reforms remained in limbo at the national level.

Carpentersville has a particular interest in that federal legislation. Just under 35,000 residents, the village is about 40 percent Latino, according to the village's 2005 "partial Special Census" requested from the U.S. Census Bureau, says Village Manager Craig Anderson.

He says there's no way to know how many residents are undocumented immigrants, but there's pressure to do something about them. The village board has been hearing from at least one person during public comment periods at most meetings since last October.

Absent federal action on immigration reform, Carpentersville's village board is considering two ordinances, one making English the official language. It would prohibit the village from posting signs, sending newsletters or issuing other communications in Spanish and English. The ordinance wouldn't stop the rest of the community and private businesses from using any language they wanted. A second ordinance would fine landlords who rent to undocumented immigrants and employers who hire them.

Anderson says there's concern that the ordinances create a false expectation about what the village can really do.

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***Without immigration reform at the federal level, more local governments could try to enact policies, despite a lack of resources to enforce them.***

"I certainly would agree there is a problem in the United States," he says. "And I can understand why local governments and some of our board members and other municipalities have started to take steps to try and address it on a local level, the frustration of not having things addressed at the federal level. But I think of it in terms of its effectiveness — there's a question of whether or not we can really enforce it." For instance, he says, "asking landlords to somehow verify that their tenants are legal — I don't know that there's a process in place for them to do that, number one."

The unknowns underscore the need for immigration reform to be addressed at a higher level, he says.

The federal immigration bill urged by President George W. Bush but opposed by conservative Republicans was designed to tighten border patrols, allow employers to hire temporary workers and provide a path to legalization for about 12 million immigrants. But it's been

shaped and reshaped with about 40 amendments. The measure was stalled as of mid-June.

Without immigration reform at the federal level, more local governments could try to enact policies, despite a lack of resources to enforce them.

Fred Tsao, policy director for the Chicago-based Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights advocacy group, says local officials concerned about the changing dynamics in their communities could try following Carpentersville's path. "You'll see a crazy patchwork of local policies that, of course, won't be uniform. And with that, a crazy patchwork of immigrant community settlements, as a result."

Illinois' immigrant populations have swelled in the Chicago region. The U.S. Census shows Cicero is more than three-fourths Latino. Tsao says Aurora, Elgin, Joliet and Waukegan also have experienced increasing Latino immigration. So have the central Illinois communities of Beardstown, Bloomington and Champaign.

Large Asian populations also have settled in the northwestern counties around Chicago.

"It's really everywhere," Tsao says.

To encourage eligible residents to become citizens, the coalition is partnering with state and local agencies in the New Americans Initiative. Launched in 2004 by Gov. Rod Blagojevich, the



network of churches, community groups and immigration counselors helps immigrants who have been here legally for five years go through the naturalization process.

Though its clients are legal permanent residents, many still have family members who are undocumented, says Karla Avila, New Americans Initiative director. She says it's a scary time for the immigrant community, given that mixed families could be separated and disintegrated. "If nothing happens at the national level, then persecution of those who are here illegally will continue," she says. "We just need to take into account that there are mixed families where some of them are already legal here, and some others are taking the step to becoming U.S. citizens."

This year, all 50 states studied immigration policy changes, more than doubling the number that were considering the issue last year, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, a Washington-based membership group of state lawmakers from across the country. But only 18 states have enacted changes so far this year. Two of them, Idaho and South Carolina, moved toward restricting public health benefits for legal residents.

Illinois provides subsidized health insurance to 24,000 children of immigrant parents, some of whom are legally here on visas and others of whom lack documentation but are eligible for All Kids, according to Teresa Kurtenbach, spokeswoman for the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services.

Republican Sen. Chris Lauzen of Aurora tried to change that by requiring families to prove citizenship in order to qualify for All Kids. Lauzen's measure also required proof of citizenship before becoming a state employee. His measure was never called.

But one immigration policy proposal that did make its way to the final passage stage — before it was held until this fall — would make Illinois one of 31 states considering granting driving privileges to undocumented immigrants, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. The Illinois measure, supported mostly by Chicago-area Democrats, would allow undocumented immigrants to get driver's certificates so they could buy car insurance and drive legally.

The issue drew more than 1,000

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## ***Uncertainty in Washington, however, makes lawmakers nervous to support such policy changes at the state level.***

advocates to Springfield in March to support the certificates and more funding for English classes. They stood shoulder to shoulder on three tiers of the Capitol rotunda as they chanted and waved American flags.

Uncertainty in Washington, however, makes lawmakers nervous to support such policy changes at the state level, says Democratic Sen. Iris Martinez of Chicago.

"If we can get something solid from Washington, then at least it helps us over here be able to have people feel more comfortable about voting for something like this," she said in early June. "Because it's really about public safety."

The measure also stalled because no Republicans agreed to support it, Tsao says. He adds end-of-session budget negotiations that extended into summer also sidelined the driver's issue.

Even if Congress approves a federal immigration reform plan, it might not be everything it's cracked up to be, says Beardstown Mayor Bob Walters.

The central Illinois town is home to the state's largest pork processing plant, now owned by Cargill Inc., which has attracted thousands of Latino immigrants. The 2003 Census numbers show Beardstown as having 5,900 residents, about 17 percent of whom are Latino. But Walters says, when accounting for undocumented immigrants, it's closer to 8,000 residents, more than 30 percent of whom are Latino. This year's kindergarten class enrollment is 70 percent Latino, he says.

"We've got a lot of wonderful Hispanic families that live in our city," says Walters, a Beardstown native serving his fifth term as mayor. "They buy homes.

They fix them up. They're really decent, caring people that have the same American dream that you and I have. But there are those who are illegal when they cross the border, and they don't seem to think that that's a problem. They think in their own minds and hearts, probably, that they haven't committed a crime. They just come here to work."

The most recent blow to the community came this spring when a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement raid led to arrests of 62 residents. They worked for a cleaning service that operated within the Cargill meat processing plant, but Cargill wasn't involved in the charges. The managers of the cleaning service later pleaded guilty to hiding undocumented immigrants who used fake identities.

"It proves [to be] a problem for everybody," Walters says. "We can track a cow with Mad Cow disease on some small farm in Canada, but we can't tell who's living next door to us."

Still, he doesn't feel comforted by the federal immigration proposals. He says a reformed legalization process, a guest-worker program and a merit-based system to identify immigrants with desirable skills distracts from what needs to be done: cracking down at the borders.

"I think the word comprehensive is nothing but a cover for the political parties, both parties," he says. "The Democrats want the Hispanic vote. And the big corporations want access to cheap labor, and that's exactly what the bill does."

Without federal action, he says he has no interest in enacting such ordinances as establishing English as the official language. He expects the town to stay the same, and the five-member Hispanic Advisory Board to continue reaching out to immigrants, linking them to services, serving as interpreters and educating English- and Spanish-speaking residents about each other.

"We're just going to have to depend on the federal government to enforce the existing immigration laws, which are probably sufficient," he says. "If the federal government can't do it, they can't expect the local communities to be the enforcement of a national issue."

But many are likely to try. □

Bethany Carson can be reached at [capitolbureau@aol.com](mailto:capitolbureau@aol.com).

See our Statehouse blog for regular  
End-of-session updates. Look  
for the bright orange banner on the  
magazine's Web site:  
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# BRIEFLY

## OVERTIME SESSION

### Electricity debate stalled state budget

**A**s of mid-June, overtime budget negotiations risked sending Illinois' state agencies into a July shutdown. Democrats, who control the legislature and the governor's office, missed the May 31 chance to approve a state budget without Republican votes.

As the constitutional deadline passed and the July 1 start date of a new fiscal year approached, Gov. Rod Blagojevich announced weekly budget meetings with the top legislative leaders. However, the first weeks of meetings produced little progress and lots finger pointing.

"We're here in overtime because of a lack of concern in the House," Senate President Emil Jones Jr. said about the other chamber's minimal-growth budget.

The proposal, pitched by Speaker Michael Madigan, resembled last year's budget, but differed in that it relied on \$300 million in new revenue by ending some corporate tax breaks. It put more money into education and included dollars for school construction, but excluded expansion of state-subsidized health insurance and cash for Chicago's mass transit system, items which are important to the governor.

In the final hours of the regularly scheduled spring session, a group of

*Photograph by Bethany Carson*



*House Speaker Michael Madigan holds a rare Statehouse press conference on the House Democrats' priorities in a state budget: education and construction. He said the House didn't have enough votes to support an increase in the income tax or sales tax and didn't much support the governor's health care plan.*

downstate lawmakers blocked the House budget from advancing to the Senate until legislative leaders agreed on a way to relieve skyrocketing electricity rates.

Downstate Ameren Illinois customers have been paying the highest rates since a 10-year freeze expired. Measures to reinstitute a rate freeze were advanced to put pressure on utilities to provide consumer relief, but the proposals stalled because of

disagreements between Madigan and Jones.

Blagojevich denounced the budget-delaying tactic through Deputy Gov. Sheila Nix.

"We think it's important that we proceed on [the electricity rate issue] as well as the budget so we don't end up in the situation where you risk or threaten some kind of a shutdown at the end of the month," she said.

Blagojevich continued to push for a form of universal health insurance for adults. He also pushed a plan to lease the Illinois Lottery, which he estimated would generate \$10 billion to help pay down the state's \$41 billion in unfunded public pension liabilities.

For their part, House Republicans opposed additional state spending.

"We believe you can balance a budget and force us to live within our means without raising taxes," argued House Minority Leader Tom Cross of Oswego. "It sure seems to me that given what's going on in the state with high gas prices, electricity rates, mortgage rates going up, it's not a time to raise taxes."

Proposals to expand gaming offered another possible revenue source, though House Republicans also opposed the plan floated by Democrats in both chambers to create four new casinos in the Chicago area.

*Bethany Carson*

## Personal injury fees

Illinois trial lawyers and business groups disagree on the meaning of a 1986 law meant to address the way in which juries assign fault in personal injury cases with multiple defendants. The debate is whether jurors should consider co-defendants who have settled out of court when tallying up what the remaining defendants will pay.

A measure introduced by Sen. John Cullerton, a Chicago Democrat, has thrown legislators in the middle of the legal debate, and, as of mid-June, they were still trying to decide whether to get involved. Cullerton wants defendants who settle out of court to be free from penalties handed out to other co-defendants who went to trial. "The

purpose of this bill is very clear," Cullerton says. "If you settle with somebody, their names don't go on the verdict form."

The interpretation of the statute came under question after the 1st District Court of Appeals in Chicago overturned a \$9 million verdict against the defendant in a wrongful death suit filed against a construction company. The court said the names of the defendants who settled should have been included in the verdict, which would have lowered the amount the remaining defendant was ordered to pay the plaintiff.

The question has moved to the Illinois Supreme Court for consideration, but the justices have yet to hand down a ruling.

Cullerton says his measure seeks to clarify the meaning of the 1986 law, but

business groups believe it would allow trial lawyers to target defendants with the deepest pockets and cause businesses to pay more than their fair share.

"In a year of bad legislation, this turkey ranks right up there as one of the worst," says Greg Baise, president of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association. "This bill distorts the civil justice system."

Sen. Kwame Raoul, a Chicago Democrat, disagrees. He says the measure could help prevent juries from assigning blame to people who already settled out of court and aren't there to defend themselves, which is called the "empty-chair defense."

As of mid-June, the legislation had stalled in the House.

*Deaneese Williams-Harris*



# LEGISLATIVE CHECKLIST

*Having missed the May 31 constitutional deadline, the Illinois General Assembly continued to debate major budget items through mid-June. While lawmakers advanced some health- and safety-related measures to the governor's desk, they're also stuck on some crime- and tax-related measures important to the Chicago area. Check our blog — <http://illinoisissuesblog.blogspot.com> — for updates about major items related to the budget that's supposed to start July 1. Meanwhile, here's a sample of the work legislators accomplished before we went to press.*



## **Stem cell research**

Public dollars would be set aside for all types of stem cell research, including highly controversial embryonic stem cell research, under a measure approved by both chambers. Gov. Rod Blagojevich previously skirted the legislative process by using executive powers to earmark money in the state budget, but grants were not given for scientific projects that use embryos.

House Minority Leader Tom Cross, whose daughter has juvenile diabetes, made an emotional plea during House floor debate for his peers to approve the proposal. "I understand people may have different beliefs and views about [stem cell research]," said Cross of Oswego. "But this is the right thing to do."

Stem cells from embryos are more malleable than adult stem cells, and they can develop into nearly all types of tissue, according to the National Institutes of Health. The research has been touted as potentially helping people with diabetes, spinal cord injuries, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and cancer.



## **HPV vaccines**

Parents would receive information about the human papillomavirus, the most common sexually transmitted disease, under a measure approved by both chambers. The disease, often called HPV, is linked to about 70 percent of cervical cancer cases, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Under the measure, parents also would get information about the three-shot series during their daughters' sixth-grade school physicals. If the governor signs the measure, the state would make the shots available free in 2011 to any female younger than 18 who wants to be vaccinated.

The sponsor, House Majority Leader Debbie Halvorson of Crete, also drafted a separate proposal earlier this year that would mandate the vaccination. That measure stalled in the Senate.



## **HIV testing**

Two measures that would target the spread of HIV through more testing won the approval of both chambers.

All expectant mothers would receive HIV counseling before being tested for the virus under one measure sponsored by Rep. Mary Flowers, a Chicago Democrat. If mothers refused testing during prenatal care, it would be documented in their medical files.

And HIV testing would be included in annual health physicals under a measure sponsored by Chicago Democratic Rep. La Shawn Ford. Doctors would have to get verbal consent from patients before testing them for the virus.



## **Property tax relief**

An extension of a three-year property tax relief plan for Cook County residents was one step away from the governor's desk at press time. The measure would extend property tax exemptions to senior citizens, long-term homeowners and veterans returning from overseas duty.

The sponsor, Sen. Terry Link, a Chicago Democrat, says it's a work in progress and he'll follow up with additional legislation to work out some of the kinks.

Business groups oppose the measure because they say commercial taxpayers would continue to bear the brunt of the tax burden in Cook County. School district officials say the proposed exemptions would cause a \$1 billion to \$2.5 billion loss of funding over the next three years.



## **Roadside markers**

Families who lost a loved one to an intoxicated driver would be able to place a standard memorial on the accident site under a measure approved by both chambers. If the governor signs it, grieving family members could apply for a roadside marker with the Illinois Department of Transportation.



## **Mental health**

Mental health facilities would forward patient information to the Illinois State Police to prohibit gun ownership by a person with mental illness deemed a danger to himself or herself or to others. Under a measure approved by both chambers, the State Police also would share the information with the Federal Bureau of Investigations. If the governor signs the measure, mental health facilities would be under the same rules currently applied to hospitals.

Family members and other caregivers would be able to admit a person with mental illness into an institution without his or her consent under another measure at the final passage stage in the Senate. If the person had a history of not being able to care for himself or herself or a history of harming others, the caregivers would be able to petition the court and ask that the person be institutionalized.



## **Teen driving safety**

New teen driving curfews would be set at 10 p.m. on weekdays and 11 p.m. on weekends if the governor signs a measure that was called for by Secretary of State Jesse White. Exemptions would be made for emergency situations and for school or jobs. Teens also would be required to carry a driver's permit for nine months instead of six months and would be restricted to driving one unrelated passenger. Those caught street racing would risk losing their licenses and their cars. If approved by the governor, some of the new rules will start January 1, others in July 2008.

Teens younger than 19 wouldn't be

## BRIEFLY

allowed to drive and talk on a cell phone except in emergencies under a separate measure approved by both chambers.



### **Horse meat ban**

The governor signed a measure banning slaughter of horses for human consumption in the state. Selling horse meat for food is illegal in the United States; however, it was shipped and sold overseas for dining. The nation's last slaughtering plant is in DeKalb. Lawmakers also were considering exceptions to the law as late as mid-June. One would allow the slaughtering of horses to make animal feed.



### **Breast exams**

Doctors would have to conduct regular breast exams and insurance companies would have to pay for them under a measure approved by both chambers. If the governor signs it, women between 20 and 39 would receive the required exam every three years. Women older than 40 would receive an exam every year. The exam would have to last six to 10 minutes.



### **Mortgage fraud**

Victims of mortgage fraud and identity theft would have more time to file a complaint against people they accuse of scamming them out of home equity and using their identities. Under a measure approved by both chambers, scam artists

would be on the hook for seven years instead of three.



### **Criminal code**

The state's criminal code would shrink by one-third under a measure approved by the Senate. For the first time in 40 years, redundant and unconstitutional language would be eliminated from the code. If approved by the House and signed by the governor, supporters say the measure would ease the backlog of cases in the state's judicial system.



### **Ammunition clips**

A proposed ban on ammunition clips that shoot off more than 10 rounds won Senate approval but stalled at the final passage stage in the House.

Supporters say the ban would ease the emotional and social costs of losing innocent victims to gun violence, while opponents say it would worsen economic losses when gun manufacturers move to other states. The issue has continued to come up in Illinois since a 1994 federal ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazine clips expired.

The National Rifle Association and downstate lawmakers say the legislation is too broad and would ban some firearms without stopping crimes like the tragedy at Virginia Tech this spring.



### **Freedom of the press**

College media would be protected from review by campus officials before publication under a measure approved by both chambers. If the governor signs it, the public institutions also would be protected from lawsuits stemming from what the campus media outlets publish.



### **Sexual predators**

Illinois would become the first state to establish a database to hold the Internet protocol addresses of convicted sexual predators, Attorney General Lisa Madigan stated in a press release. Under a measure approved by both chambers, sexual predators also would have to fork over their protocol addresses and consent to random checks of their computers, cell phones and other communication devices as a condition of parole.

If the governor signs the measure, law enforcement would gain the ability to track down and prosecute child pornographers and individuals who use the Internet to lure unsuspecting children.



### **Dining with dogs**

Dog owners would be able to take their furry friends to outdoor seating areas in restaurants if the governor signs a measure approved by both chambers.

*Bethany Carson and Deaneese Williams-Harris*

## ARCHITECTURE

### **Historic Elgin barn collapses in wind**

*Photograph courtesy of the Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois*



*This is the Teeple Barn, freshly painted at the end of its heyday in the 1960s.*

Unique in Illinois, the 16-sided Teeple Barn in Kane County collapsed under the pressure of high winds on Memorial Day weekend. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the barn was built in 1885 by Lester Teeple, a lumberman turned dairy farmer. At the time, Elgin was the center of the dairy industry and was a leader in butter production.

Teeple hired local architect W.W. Abell to design a barn for his growing dairy herd. In addition to its polygonal shape, the barn was known for its central hay-lifting and distribution device and its sophisticated X-bracing.

The family sold the farm in 1998. The barn, no longer in a rural area, was crowded by a manufacturing plant, a busy tollway and other congestion. Nevertheless, it was a local landmark. The Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois named the barn one of its Ten Most Endangered Historic Places in 1999 (see *Illinois Issues*, April 1999, page 9). During the millennium celebration, it was placed on a National Geographic list called "Saving America's Treasures."

Preservationists had spent years and hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to save the structure and find a new use for it.

*Beverley Scobell*



## FARM SHOW

### Inventions reap cash rewards

Farmers don't come to mind when we think of inventors. But farmers, who live by the proverb "necessity is the mother of invention," find creative ways to solve their own problems.

This year's Farm Progress Show in Decatur will display the creations of 10 finalists in the Inventors Challenge. Visitors will get the chance to vote for the top three, and the winners, who will receive cash prizes of up to \$3,000, will be announced on the last day.

The inaugural contest, held last year in Amana, Iowa, drew entries from across the country. The top prize went to two Farmington, Mo., men who invented a two-layer rubber mat with a conductive layer that attaches to an electric fence to contain animals but keeps a person with rubber or vinyl-solid shoes from getting shocked. It also allows gates to remain open for vehicles.

The Farm Progress Show will be held on the Richland Community College campus from August 28-30.

*Beverley Scobell*



*Cows learn to avoid stepping on the Gap Zapper mat, the winning invention at last year's Farm Progress Show.*

## ECOLOGY

### College class plants a garden, solves a drainage problem

A new garden on the University of Illinois' Urbana campus combines form, function and art. The Red Oak Rain Garden is the end product of the Restoration Ecology class project in which the students applied what they learned in lectures to a real-world problem.

A pathway north of the retention pond on the south end of campus always flooded after a heavy rain, making the sidewalk often impassable and giving a nearby mature red oak wet feet that threatened its health. Now, strategically placed rocks and native Illinois water-loving plants direct and filter the stormwater while creating an attractive area. The garden has the added dimension of an original piece of sculpture, created by industrial design graduate student Jennifer Astwood. Called *Prairie Fire*, the rusted steel "flames" rise from the ground amid the new plantings.

Tony Endress, professor of natural resources and environmental sciences, teaches the class and oversees restoration work. He has guided such hands-on learning projects for a decade, but this is the first on-campus project. The university's Facilities & Services Department, in conjunction with the university's Environmental Council, funded the project and helped the students install the garden.

"This rain garden project was unique," says Endress, "in that it involved three classes sequentially."

Because the university had committed funds to implement the plan, the spring

class did the initial design, applying ecological principles. The summer class, Endress says, fine-tuned the design and made the calculations for the materials that would be needed: how much and what size rock, what kind and how many plants, what plan would work within the budget. The fall semester was treated as an internship, and

*Photograph courtesy of Facilities & Services Department, UIUC*



*Original artwork by a UIUC student adds interest to a new garden that solved a campus drainage problem.*

that class did the actual building, with students meeting afternoons, four days a week, giving as much time as they could squeeze from their schedules.

Endress runs the class as a corporation, with himself as CEO. Class members submit resumes to compete for management positions and assume those responsibilities. Normally, projects run one semester and end with a formal design presentation juried by practicing landscapers and restoration ecologists.

"We try to make it as authentic as one can do in a somewhat sheltered academic environment," he says.

Senior Alex Mills, who took the summer class and the fall internship, was in charge of selecting and moving most of the rocks. "It was a lot of fun," he says. "The planning and then the real-world aspect of building the garden, seeing it go together, enhanced the experience."

C. Eliana Brown, coordinator of special programs for the Facilities & Services Department, says the project was so successful that talks are ongoing about tackling other stormwater problems on campus with garden solutions. "This was just such a great learning experience for everyone."

Other projects Endress and past ecology students have completed include designs for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, various governmental bodies in Champaign County and a two-year restoration of the pond at Allerton Park.

*Beverley Scobell*



## HISTORY

### Businesses and nonprofits honored by historical society

*Photographs courtesy of the Illinois State Historical Society*

Some Illinois businesses can claim histories nearly as long as the state's. The Springfield *State Journal-Register* last year celebrated 175 years of continuous service as the capital's newspaper. It was one of the businesses recognized in 2006 by the Illinois State Historical Society. Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield and Illinois State University in Normal were honored for 150 years. The Chicago Cubs have hit 130 years.

The Centennial Awards Program, established in 1984, has honored more than 1,100 businesses and not-for-profit organizations that have operated in

Illinois for 100 years or more. Applicants must have been incorporated in the state and show evidence of continuous operation for a century or more.

Previous Centennial Award recipients are encouraged to apply for 125-, 150- and 175-year awards.

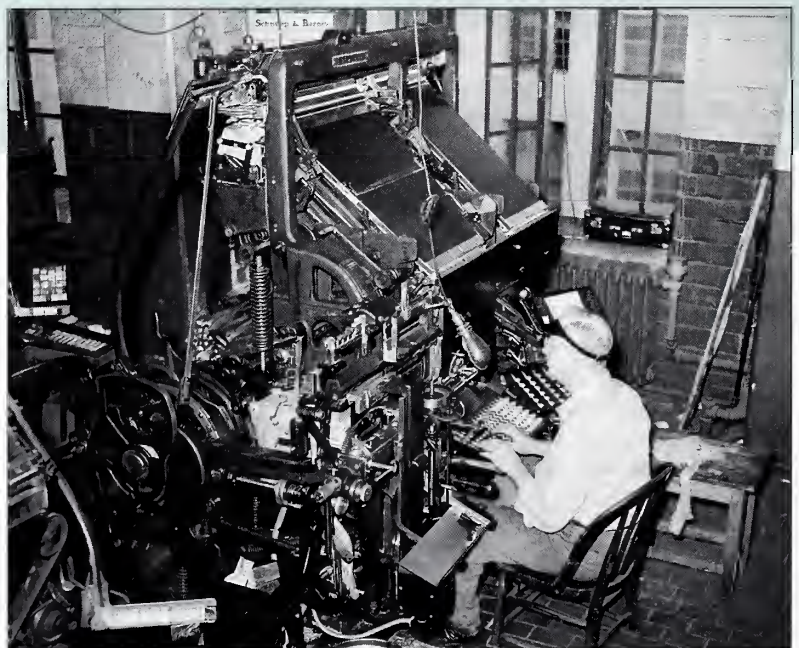
The historical society will host a reception at the Executive Mansion in Springfield on October 6 to present the 2007 awards. The deadline for applying is July 27. Applications are available at [www.history.illinois.org](http://www.history.illinois.org).

*Beverley Scobell*

*Oak Ridge Cemetery was founded in 1856, following an ordinance that forbid burials inside Springfield's city limits. The official dedication, attended by Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln, took place in 1860. Originally a 12-acre tract, the cemetery now encompasses more than 300 acres on Springfield's north side. Many local cemeteries were eventually relocated there. It's the home of the Lincoln Tomb, where President Lincoln, his wife Mary and their sons Edward, William and Thomas are buried. Oak Ridge Cemetery is the second-most visited cemetery in the United States behind Arlington National Cemetery. Oak Ridge also is the burial place of several Illinois governors, as well as the internationally known Springfield poet Vachel Lindsay.*



*The State Journal-Register was founded on November 10, 1831, as the Sangamo Journal. The 175-year-old State Journal-Register has defined "the news" in Springfield and central Illinois for generations. "The Journal paper was always my friend," wrote Abraham Lincoln in 1864. He was not exaggerating. Lincoln and Simeon Francis, the paper's publisher, were close friends, and the Journal was a staunch defender of Republican Party politics during the Civil War. Its chief competitor was the Illinois State Register, a paper with loyalties to the Democratic Party. Their rivalry ended in 1974 when both papers were acquired by the Copley Press and merged to form the State Journal-Register. It was purchased this year by Gatehouse Media. This 1940s-era typesetting machine brought the paper into the computer age. Today, the paper has a circulation of more than 70,000.*







*The Bosnian Muslim Benevolent Society of Illinois was established in 1906. In the early 20th century, many Bosnian Muslims arrived in Chicago. Isolated by culture, language and religion, the immigrants quickly learned to balance assimilation with the preservation of their culture and religion. The organizers served their community in ways that included help with hospital bills and Muslim funeral arrangements. They also worked to preserve their religious and national customs. The group sent substantial humanitarian aid to Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995.*



*TC Industries Inc. was founded in 1881 on one of the oldest industrial sites in northern Illinois. The company became one of the nation's largest manufacturers of architectural terra cotta after World War I. George A. Berry Jr. purchased the enterprise in 1933, and kilns were added for heat-treating steel mill products, which quickly became the company's principal industry. The last architectural terra cotta was produced in 1966, and in 1972, the American Steel Treating Co., Processed Steel Co. and AMTEC Corp. became divisions of TC Industries. In 1985, TC Industries of Europe opened in Skinningrove, England, and TC Industries of Canada opened in Manitoba in 1998. Today, the company is operated by the third generation of the George A. Berry family.*



*V. Formusa Company Inc. was started by Italian immigrant Vincent Formusa, who was a jeweler and watchmaker by trade. But in 1898, the Chicago entrepreneur saw a golden opportunity. He began importing quality pastas, tomatoes and olive oil from Italy and soon had the market cornered in his neighborhood. Founder of the well-known Marconi Brand Product line, Formusa brought two of his sons into the business and expanded the original storefront to a five-building complex. The company branched out and the now familiar "F" shield — signifying the Marconi trademark — is featured on antipasto and garnishes, salad dressings and hot and mild giardinieras, or pickled vegetables, throughout Chicago and around the nation. Sales through the Internet have made the V. Formusa Company an international Illinois success story.*

**For more news see the *Illinois Issues* Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>**



# Front lines

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## Activists fear Illinois is losing the battle for open space

by Stephanie Zimmermann

There's a point about 35 miles southwest of downtown Chicago where Harlem Avenue, the famed four-lane thoroughfare that cuts through the city and then the suburbs, starts to lose steam. The storefront shops and pizzerias give way to longer expanses of space, and finally, on the edge of southwest suburban Frankfort in Will County, there are no drugstores or fast-food joints but sprawling, open, green farm fields. Here and there is an old barn, and then some rows of early summer corn, then another several open acres, freshly planted with more crops. Harlem Avenue quietly narrows to one lane in each direction and the number of cars drops precipitously. Up ahead is Laraway Road, and a right turn leads to an open swath of forest preserve land, thick with trees and wild grass. The land gets a little hillier, suggesting the terrain of southern Wisconsin.

But there's something else ahead on the road besides woods and chirping birds. Bright new signs: Lakeview Estates. Majestic Pines. Stone Creek — Lots now for sale! They show off another side of this pastoral place far from Chicago: new development. Huge brick homes have sprung up on the south side of Laraway Road west of Harlem Avenue, and nearby there's more excavated land with lot markers to assist would-be buyers. Heading west toward Joliet, the scene is repeated again and again, as farmland gives way to new subdivisions.

This area of Will County is one of the front lines in the battle for open space in

Illinois — a battle that activists fear the state is losing. Illinois, they say, is falling behind its neighbors in its commitment to acquiring and managing undeveloped land. As land costs rise and suburbs spread farther and farther out, opportunities to preserve open space will be lost if more isn't done quickly. And, they say, even though Chicago's collar counties are where development is occurring now, citizens in those areas have a lot in common with downstate farmers and hunters in the race to preserve open lands.

When a Will County farmer sells his land to a developer and moves to central Illinois to roll his profit into another piece of farmland, his actions drive up land prices downstate, says Jonathan Goldman, executive director of the Illinois Environmental Council Education Fund. That makes it tougher for farmers there to expand their holdings, if, for example, they wish to expand into more land for corn and ethanol production. And as land prices rise around the state, so do the costs for hunting groups that want parcels. "Once it's developed, it's gone. We're not making any more land," Goldman says. "That has now trickled down into the rest of Illinois."

Those pressing for more dollars for open space acquisition say Illinois could do more. A report issued in March by the Illinois Environmental Council Education Fund, along with The Trust for Public Land and The Nature Conservancy, put Illinois behind most of its Midwestern

neighbors in state government spending on open space. The report found more bad news affecting the entire state:

- Even though Illinois boasts more than 1.34 million acres dedicated to outdoor recreation, most of those are not considered "high quality" natural areas.
- Between 1995 and 2000, the Chicago metropolitan region lost more than 140,000 acres of rural grasslands and wetlands.
- Statewide, Illinois has lost more than 90 percent of its original wetlands and 99.99 percent of its original prairie and has 424 state-listed and 24 federal-listed threatened or endangered species.

The Prairie State is at the confluence of several types of natural areas — woodlands in states north and east of us, prairies west of us and forests and swamps south of us — and is a prime spot on many migratory birds' routes. While we might not have the wilderness cachet of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Wisconsin's North Woods or Minnesota's "10,000 lakes," Illinois nevertheless has some uniquely beautiful areas that are worth preserving.

The ecological reasons to preserve and manage open space are often the first to come to mind. Because of disappearing natural habitats, the richness of species here is declining by about 3 percent a year, according to Stephen Packard, director of Audubon's Chicago region. Salamanders, orchids, warblers, butterflies — all have become victims of Illinois' dearth of



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Convenient public and parochial schools assure the children of Park Forest a full education. Two nursery schools provide pre-school training by experts. Also, the new \$1,600,000 Rich Township High School is being built in Park Forest on a 50 acre tract donated by the village developers. It will be ready for Fall, 1953.

**RECREATION AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**  
Park Forest's modern Holiday Theater with a sound-proof "cry" room for baby, features first-run films. Tennis courts and playgrounds satisfy the outdoor desires of young and old. Convenient golf courses and Forest Preserves. Over 70 social clubs offer activities for all ages.

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From the beginning the builders of Park Forest recognized the need for the religious life of the community. As the village expanded, land was set aside for church buildings to meet the need of congregations. Several already are in use, more are being planned.

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*Chicago's* **COMPLETELY PLANNED Suburb**

*America's first post-World War II planned community, Park Forest represents suburbia. Its first homes were multifamily rental units for returning servicemen. During the early 1950s, thousands of small single-family "starter homes" were built, including a subdivision of Levittown houses by eastern developer William Levitt. A third building surge developed larger, two-story homes.*

open space and lax management of the parcels that have been set aside.

Beyond that, most people intuitively understand that having open, natural areas is good for public health. Having areas to hike and bike encourages outdoor exercise, and keeping wetlands helps improve water quality.

There also are economic reasons to promote the acquisition and upkeep of natural spaces, advocates say. For instance, fishing, hunting and other wildlife-associated recreation generates nearly \$4 billion in economic activity annually, the Illinois Environmental Council Education Fund report estimates. Millions of Illinoisans and other visitors come to Illinois' state parks each year — and when they come, they stay in local lodges and hotels. "That brings a lot of money into the state. It supports a lot of jobs in Illinois," Goldman says.

In a larger sense, having beautiful, unspoiled areas also can make a state a more attractive place to live — and relocate to. "Part of being happy means having rich surroundings," Packard says, "offering our children and our communities the opportunity to live a balanced life, which includes the richness of the natural world. Without it, we'd lose motivation for the rest."

State Rep. Beth Coulson, a Glenview

Republican, first got into politics to fight the flooding that plagued her region north of Chicago. But in working on open space issues in the Illinois legislature, Coulson says she has found natural links with downstate hunters and farmers. She says many Illinoisans have reached a tipping point, where they realize the importance of preserving some open space before it's too late. "My sense is that the closer-in suburbs have reached it," she says. Farther out from Chicago, "they're getting there because of the traffic." Farther still, farmers don't really want to be hemmed in by exurban developments without any easements as a buffer. And hunters, too, are realizing they need to act before it's too late.

"I think society is changing. I think people are better able to realize that you can plan well and have a better environment," Coulson says.

But despite this agreement on the importance of preserving open land, Illinois spent only \$2.67 per capita on open space from 1999 to 2004, according to the report, compared to \$9.80 in Wisconsin, \$5.76 in Minnesota and \$4.36 in Ohio. Illinois is in the bottom five of all 50 states when it comes to acres of open space in public ownership — and is dead last among the Midwestern states for the number of acres of open

space per capita. More recently, Illinois' fiscal woes led to funds being diverted from conservation programs. In 2004, Gov. Rod Blagojevich famously proposed taking a one-year "holiday" from spending on open space and natural areas to shore up the state's budget — a statement that has kept open space activists on high alert ever since.

"When you compare, you see we've got to make up for lost time," says Susan Donovan, director of government relations for The Nature Conservancy. With land prices rising quickly in many areas, "we really do need to act now to get the most bang for our buck."

The state's two main sources for acquiring open land are the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Fund, which gives grants to local partners to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund, which helps acquire, preserve and maintain natural areas. Both are funded through the state's Real Estate Transfer Tax, which brings in a nice chunk of money as long as the real estate market booms. But the two programs also are an easy target for state budget strategists looking for extra dollars.

Meanwhile, money for the \$200 million Open Land Trust program, funded

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***For its part, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources says it's not necessarily at odds with what the advocacy groups want.***

by the state's last big special capital budget in 1999, was discontinued after its four years ran out.

Those pushing for better protection of open land are pressing for inclusion in a future capital needs budget. They've already named their program — iSPACE, for Illinois Special Places Acquisition, Conservation and Enhancement — and would like to see \$100 million a year dedicated to the cause, alongside spending on roads, mass transit, schools and the usual items a capital budget contains. The money would be used to acquire new lands, creating recreational opportunities, expanding hunting, improving water quality and funding habitat restoration and land management. "I think we are due, and if we have a capital budget, it should be included," Coulson says. "The only way we're going to get it [spending] back up there is with a capital budget."

Backers of the iSPACE proposal won a victory in spirit in May when the full Illinois Senate and a majority of the Illinois House voted to endorse \$100 million in new funding for open space. The bipartisan effort drew support from all over the state. Those pushing for iSPACE include such diverse groups as Pheasants Forever, United Bowhunters of Illinois, the Illinois chapter of the Sierra Club and the Illinois Audubon Society.

Ideally, its advocates say, iSPACE would be part of a comprehensive funding strategy for open lands acquisition and management that would include full

funding for the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development fund and Natural Areas Acquisition Fund programs. Some advocates also have suggested the state consider other measures, including issuing general obligation bonds, increasing the sales tax by one-eighth of one cent, increasing the Real Estate Transfer Tax, adding a special sales tax on hunting and fishing equipment and increasing the garbage tipping fee — though iSPACE is the centerpiece.

Ironically, the budget diversions of recent years may have strengthened advocates of open space, at least organizationally. After budget cuts appeared a few years ago, open space advocates made a point of broadening their reach — statewide and across different groups, from sportsmen and taxidermists to bird watchers and bicyclists. Farmers were nudged to protect easements for endangered species. In northeastern Illinois, newly developing outer suburbs "have enormous opportunities to act," says Steve Buchtel, Southland coordinator for the Chicago Bicycle Federation, which is working to build a 26-mile-long network of bicycling trails in the southern suburbs. "It's important to get people to think about what kind of [land] uses they'll want to have over their lifetime."

For its part, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources says it's not necessarily at odds with what the advocacy groups want. But the department also has to work with the money it is given, says Deputy Director Deborah Stone. Recognizing the tight fiscal climate — in fiscal year 2005, Illinois had the largest state deficit in the nation — the natural resources agency has tried to harness federal matching funds and private help where possible to preserve open land, Stone says.

For example, in the past year, the department helped acquire through an unusual partnership about 113 acres around the Black Crown Marsh straddling Lake and McHenry counties in northeastern Illinois. The sale of the property — the former home of the Oakmount Game Club — was facilitated by the private Corporation for Open Lands, which snapped up the land on behalf of the state and the Lake County

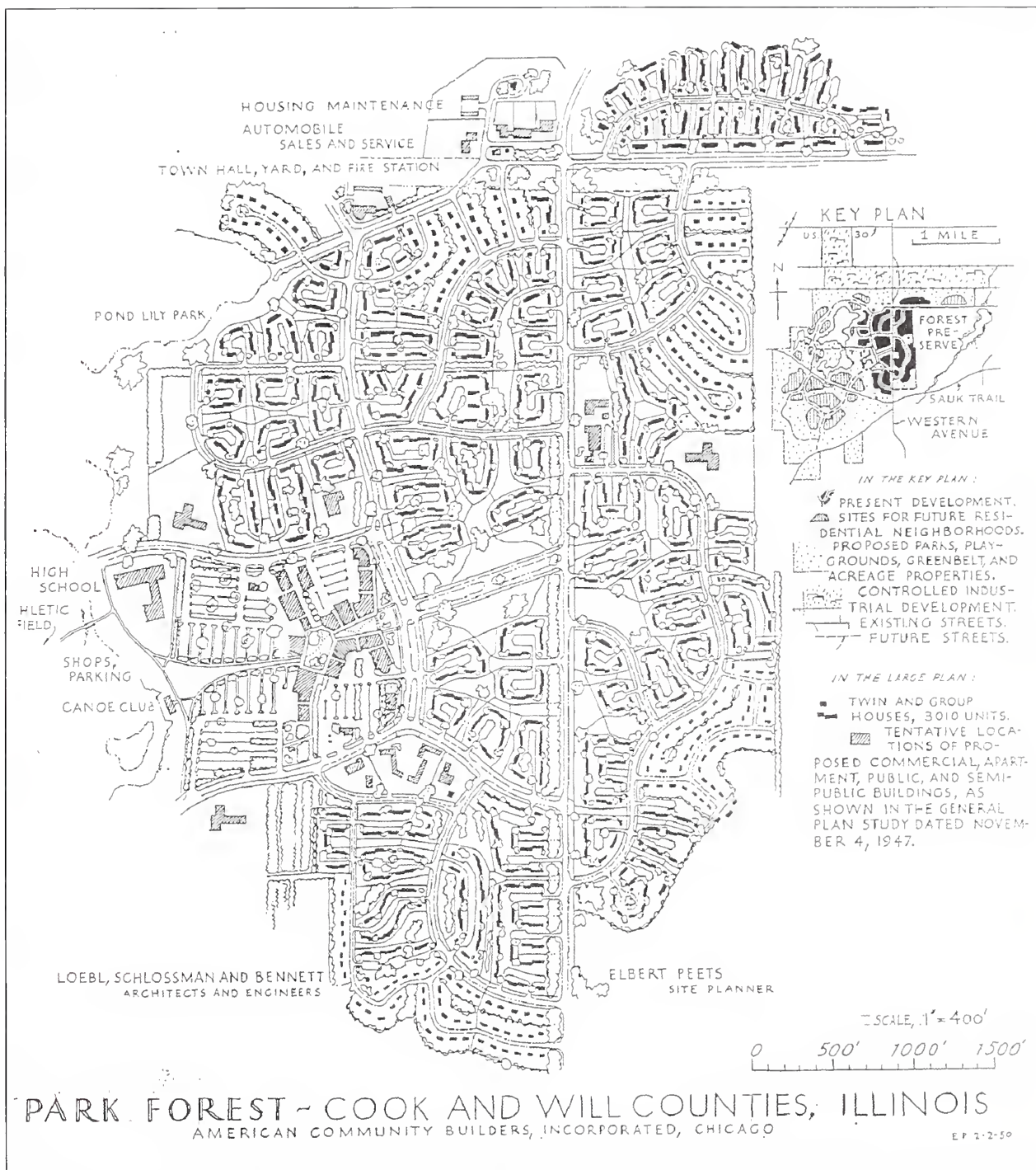
Forest Preserve District. Altogether, about 3,000 local- and state-managed acres have been protected in the area. The latest piece cost about \$5 million and was paid for with state Natural Areas Acquisition Fund money, federal Land and Water Conservation program funds and a private donation through the Illinois Conservation Foundation.

In the Alton Bluffs area and the lower Sangamon River watershed, the state has helped get federal U.S. Fish and Wildlife grants to landowners to restore almost 600 acres of open space. Much of the work was done by the landowners and natural resources department staff, Stone says. By getting creative and taking advantage of opportunities like that, "we can get a lot of bang for very little buck," Stone says. "We think recreation is important, and we think preserving the natural history is important, and we do the best we can with the resources that we have."

There are some other bright spots. After a couple lean years, the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development program in fiscal year 2007 gave out about \$32 million in grants, the highest amount in the program's history, Stone says. Also, the state spent about \$15 million on the Hunting Heritage Protection Act program this fiscal year, mostly to acquire new land. And the governor's proposed budget for 2008 includes about \$10 million for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, which uses state money to leverage federal and private funds to buy easements.

If more funds do become available, the state will be ready, Stone says — and open space advocates agree — with two important tools: the State Wildlife Action Plan and the Natural Areas Inventory. The first is a tally of which wildlife and plant species are most in need of protection and which areas they use for habitats; the second categorizes which land areas should be preserved first. In the second year of a three-year plan, the Natural Areas Inventory will update its data and rank land parcels according to their quality. "Illinois was really the first state in the nation to do an effort like this, but it was 30 years ago," Stone says of the Natural Areas Inventory.





*Park Forest was established in 1946. Architect Edward Bennett designed the groundbreaking shopping malls, schools, early residences and other structures. The community's original master plan by Elbert Peets ensured a convenient commercial center, a child-safe curvilinear street system, a business and light industrial park, and multiple, scattered school and recreational facilities. Chicago's first regional mall, Park Forest Plaza, evoked images of a village green, but instead of a regular lane of shops with a clear focal point, this more irregular plan encouraged discovery and lingering.*

The best part is that the document will be put online — hopefully sometime next year — and made accessible to local governments and private organizations that want to coordinate open lands work.

Donovan, of The Nature Conservancy,

says those plans will give the state and private organizations the information they need to act quickly, as long as the money comes in. “We’ve done our homework,” she says.

“There are a lot of different interests that are coming together,” she adds,

sounding an optimistic note for more funding this year. “I’m very hopeful. I feel like it’s a very important juncture. I’m hopeful that we can make the case.” □

*Stephanie Zimmermann is a reporter for the Chicago Sun-Times and a frequent contributor to Illinois Issues.*

# THE GREEN WAY

## RESTORE AND PRESERVE NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

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If we can help sustain the earth by recycling old newspapers and magazines, why not old buildings?

Mike Jackson, chief architect of preservation services in the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, argues that maintaining and reusing residential, public and commercial spaces is another way to help meet our present generation's needs without jeopardizing future generations' needs, the commonly accepted definition of environmental sustainability. Sustainable design and historic preservation, he wrote in the *Bulletin* of the Association for Preservation Technology International, are both "concerned with the built environment and its relationship to the natural one."

In other words, older buildings are green. Jackson suggests a few reasons: They were made with "indigenous, renewable materials that

respond to local climatic conditions"; they have windows that admit fresh air and natural light; they are compact and more efficient to heat; and they have cisterns for collecting rainwater. These features, he wrote, were "common in late-nineteenth-century buildings and are now championed as green."

Jackson and his colleagues at the agency point to another value: Older buildings preserve cultural history. We thank Jackson, his agency and the American Institute of Architects for letting us look through their collections of photographs documenting Illinois architectural preservation efforts. We share some of them here in this first annual environment, arts and culture issue. It's difficult to pick a favorite, but the old gas station recycled into a garden center stands as a notable paradox.

*The Editors*

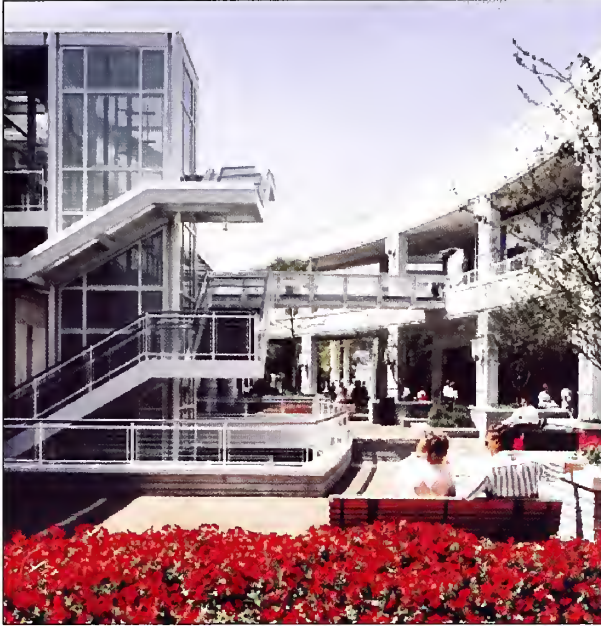
Photograph by Nels Akerlund, courtesy of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency



*The Garfield Park Conservatory, which encloses nearly 4.5 acres of space, is one of the three largest public conservatories in the world. Opened in 1908, it was designed by famed landscape architect Jens Jensen to emulate the hay stacks of the Midwest rural landscape. The main conservatory space continues to serve as a home for "landscape art under glass."*



Photograph courtesy of the American Institute of Architects Northeastern Illinois



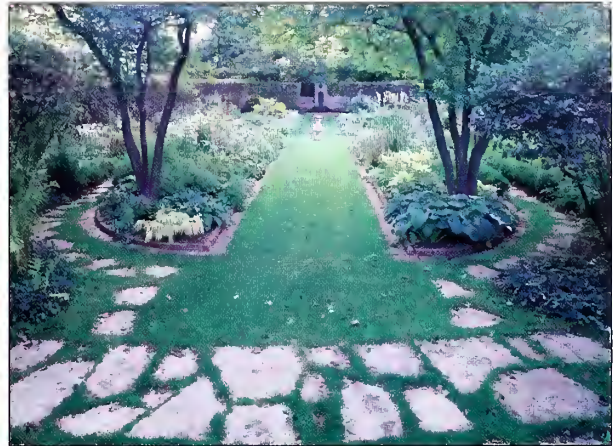
Photograph by Wes Urschel, courtesy of the American Institute of Architects Chicago



Photograph courtesy of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources



Photograph by Nels Akerlund, courtesy of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency



**Top Left:** The Oakbrook Center, located in Oak Brook in DuPage County, opened in 1962 and has become a landmark in American shopping center development. Its 1.2 million square feet of building space is set in a park-like environment, harmoniously combining retail architecture, plant material, lighting, water features and canopies.

**Bottom Left:** The locktender's house at Lock No. 8 on the I&M Canal west of Dresden at Aux Sable is one of only two remaining on the 96-mile waterway. Finished in 1848, the canal opened a new transportation corridor between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River that led to the growth of Chicago and the state.

**Top Right:** Crab Tree Farm in Lake Bluff is a former dairy restored as a cultural and arts center. The farm and dairy

buildings have been decorated with collections of original furnishings from the Arts and Crafts Movement. In 1911, after a fire destroyed the original farm buildings, owner Grace Durand hired Chicago architect Solon Spencer Beman to design barns constructed of steel and concrete. The French symmetry reflects the architect's Beaux-Arts training.

**Bottom Right:** The Shakespeare Garden on the campus of Northwestern University in Evanston is open to visitors. Designed by Jens Jensen, the garden was completed in 1920 as a project of the Garden Club of Evanston to commemorate the 300th anniversary of Shakespeare's death and to celebrate ties between England and America. The flowers, shrubs, trees and herbs in the garden are mentioned in Shakespeare's plays. Many of the original hawthorns that were started from seed in France form the base of the formal garden.





Photograph courtesy of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency



**Top:** The stained glass dome in the ceiling of the Lincoln Public Library reflects the classic style of libraries built with donations from Andrew Carnegie around the turn of the last century. The central Illinois city built its library in 1902, and few changes have been made to the structure.

**Bottom Left:** The interior of the Franklin House in downtown Alton is being renovated and restored to turn the former hotel into apartments and lofts. Retail space is planned for the ground floor.

Photograph courtesy of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency



**Bottom Right:** Local lore claims Abraham Lincoln used the hotel as his headquarters during his run for the U.S. Senate. Wife Mary Todd and son Robert joined him for the seventh debate with Stephen Douglas, the only debate she attended. In 1860, the owners of the hotel changed its name to the Lincoln Hotel, which remained until it closed years later. The Franklin House is one of nine local stops on a planned tour of Civil War-era sites, part of the Lincoln Bicentennial celebration.





Photograph courtesy of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency



**Top:** The 1894 Oscar Mandel home, destined for demolition like all other houses on the block, was moved to a new lot in Bloomington and has been restored over the past three years. The Queen Anne house was designed by architect George Miller and had remained virtually unchanged from a 1909 remodeling. Today the house more closely resembles its former state, though interior work is ongoing.

**Bottom Left:** The Hotel Florence was designed between 1880 and 1884 by landscape engineer Nathan F. Barrett and

Photograph courtesy of the American Institute of Architects Northeastern Illinois



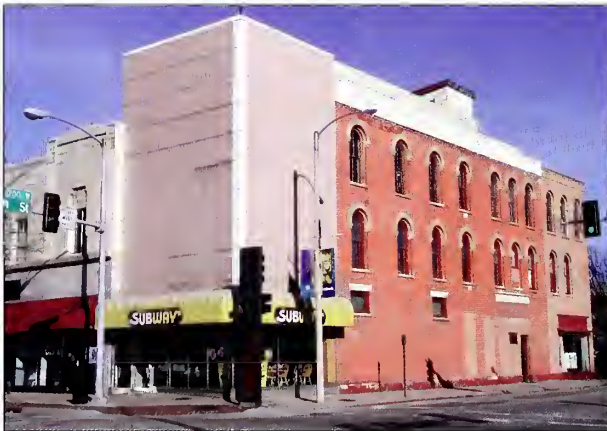
Chicago architect Solon Spencer Beman, who designed the entire 300-acre community of Pullman, home of the Pullman Palace Car Co. In 1896, the Austrian government named it "the most perfect town in the world."

**Bottom Right:** The Legge Memorial Lodge, designed in the early 1920s by Chicago architect R. Harold Zook, became a retreat for female employees of International Harvester, for which Alexander Legge was president. The lodge and the 52 acres of woodland that surrounds it are in Hinsdale.





Photograph courtesy of Gary W. Anderson & Associates



**Top:** The Pure Oil Station, located at 5th and State Street in the historic district of Geneva in Kane County, is an example of a 1920s-era English Cottage. Once an auto repair shop, the cottage was later transformed into a garden nursery.

**Bottom Left:** A “before view” of the Richardson Building in Rockford shows years of add-ons. The 1865 building is on a prominent corner of the historic downtown district that once was a trolley stop one block from the river.

Photograph courtesy of Gary W. Anderson & Associates



**Bottom Right:** After a recent renovation, the 1960s “ship cover” was removed from the front facade of the Richardson Building. The owners restored the arches and window sills along the streetscape. In the process, they had to commission windowmakers to fashion new windows to match the original 1865 windows. They transformed long-vacant upper floors into three luxury loft-style apartments.





Photograph courtesy of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency



**Top:** The Pike County Courthouse was built in 1894 by Robert Franklin. Located in the historic district of Pittsfield, it is the fourth built in Pike County. The dome reaches 136 feet.

**Bottom Left:** Cloud State Bank in McLeansboro opened on the town square in the late 1800s by Chalon G. Clond. The symmetry and mansard roof resemble the Second French Empire style. The Hamilton County building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 and now operates as Peoples National Bank.

Photograph courtesy of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency



**Bottom Right:** The Granite Bank Building in Quincy was built in 1892 by Chicago architects Patton & Fisher. Prominent Quincy architect Ernest M. Wood designed the western addition in 1906, seamlessly matching the first half. It was constructed in pink Missouri granite and decorated with massive iron and oak doors, and the five arches resemble the Romanesque style. It currently houses a gallery for local artists, including a gift shop and a coffee shop.





Photograph courtesy of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency



Photograph courtesy of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency



**Top:** *The Coronado Theater in Rockford has been fully restored as a local civic and entertainment facility. Designed by Peoria architect Frederick Klien, it is an example of the atmospheric style of historic movie palaces. Through the use of lighting, plain and plaster ornamentation, the atmospheric style creates the impression that the auditorium is actually an outdoor courtyard. Star-like lights twinkle against a navy blue “sky” ceiling, and a special machine projects moving clouds on the flat plaster.*

**Bottom Left and Right:** *The inner lobby of the Rialto Square Theatre in Joliet was based on the Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles in France. The archway dividing it and the rotunda was based on the Arc de Triomphe. The rotunda itself was based on the Pantheon in Rome. The Rialto reflects the increase in recreational opportunities available to the middle class between the world wars. Today, it serves as a venue for live entertainment and public events.*



# ROMANCING THE PRAIRIE

*Nature preserves are refuges for endangered attitudes, as well as plants and animals*

Essay by James Krohe Jr.

Nature is a foreign country to those raised in the city. And just as advanced cultures have always sought out foreign countries — especially primitive ones — in which they might indulge themselves in ways forbidden at home, nature-lovers of this country often find satisfactions in doing and thinking things in nature's world that are forbidden in their own.

The Romantics sought in nature the wildness and solitude their too-crowded and too-orderly society had banished.

Today, those of us of a certain age visit nature through the wonders of the wildlife documentary. The appeal of the genre is the opportunity it affords to briefly purge the mind of the everyday by stirring the primal emotions.

The Illinois prairie would seem to offer scant rewards to the prurient compared to the outback or the veldt, but even here nature provides escape from the polite and the politically correct. Many a modern environmentalist, prideful of her advanced views on all other matters sexual, still sees nature in terms that even her grandmothers would have found condescending. The novelist Louise Erdrich, in rhapsodizing about the prairies of her native Minnesota, noted that the grasses there “grow lush in order to be devoured or caressed,



Photograph courtesy of the Glenview Park District

*Kennicott Grove, owned by the Glenview Park District, is a convergence of nature and culture. Trails offer views of restored savanna and pioneer living.*

stiffen in sweet elegance, invent startling seeds ... Provide. Provide. Be lovely and do no harm.”

And it is the rare writer who, faced with conveying the beauty of a prairie in flower, does not compare it to a comely lass, a species otherwise all but extinct. Donald Culross Peattie, who is widely regarded as a poet of the prairie, once wrote of the savanna he knew at today's Kennicott Grove in suburban Glenview. “There is something about flowers carpeting between old boles [tree trunks] that is like the passing of a woman's skirts.” What exactly that something is, Peattie does not explain, but women often confuse men that way.

Then there is the thrill in what might be called plain old garden-variety sex. Steven Packard is a pioneer in the

practical science of restoring prairie and savanna ecosystems. He figured prominently in the 1995 book *Miracle Under the Oaks* by *New York Times* science writer William Stevens about what was then known as the North Branch Prairie Restoration Project in the Chicago area. “They entranced me with their sexiness and their delicacy,” he says to Stevens about the flowering plants in the prairie/savanna herbaria. Flowers are, of course, the plant's sexual

organs, so the comparison is apt. It also is persuasive, and not only to males. At least one female volunteer quoted by Stevens was excited to redouble her efforts to save these plants after realizing she and they were sisters.

As for the men, their impulse is to protect what Packard once referred to as “fair damsels.” If the idealized Victorian woman has disappeared from our suburban kitchens, she has been reincarnated in their remnant prairies and savannas. Nature is imagined as the swooning female on her divan, secluded in her boudoir; the suburban nature preserve has taken on virtually all the virtues of the Victorian home, in which the woman is protected from an aggressive, importuning, corrupting male.

Such a wife needs a husband to protect her. No wonder then that the ethic of the restorationists is described in the same words that describe the dutiful Victorian husband; Packard has done it, and so did Stephanie Mills in her 1995 book, *In Service of the Wild*, when she wrote, “The discipline’s fidelity to the original ecological communities of the places being restored is a profound obeisance to Nature.”

It is not only female nature’s physical self that is thought fragile. So is her virtue. When the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission surveyed the state in the 1970s for natural areas worth placing under public protection, degraded savannas were officially deemed not worth saving. Like a seduced virgin who had been rendered unfit for marriage, they were abandoned to her fate until citizen-ecologists took them in. When Steve Packard — who for a time worked for the nonprofit group that advised the commission — first encountered the prairie/savanna remnants along the Chicago River that had been ecologically degraded by aggressive invaders, he did not turn his back scornfully on the fallen virgin, but sought, as did reformers of that day, to restore her to self-respect.

These days it is not the traduced virgin that expressed the dilemma of our natural areas but a more literal sort of conquered territory. Roughly a third of the vascular plants growing in Illinois are not native to the region but were introduced from abroad. A few of them, like garlic mustard, have made themselves rather too much at home in the region’s remnant prairies and savannas. Consider *Rhamnus cathartica*, the European buckthorn. Introduced to this country as an ornamental tree and hedge plant, it is a stubborn and aggressive spreader that is heartily detested by restorationists who spend many a weekend in bloody hand-to-hand combat with it. Densely leafed, it darkens a savanna floor so thoroughly that



*Frogs, turtles and crayfish, along with irises and carnivorous plants, are among the wildlife featured in the Wetland Greenhouse at Kennicott Grove.*

in a few brief summers once-diverse neighborhoods are turned into ecological slums.

Opportunistic plant species like the buckthorn are known by several generic terms. “Non-native” is the most accurate, followed by “introduced” for those like the buckthorn that were imported for a purpose. “Exotic” carries with it a whiff of the strange; its cousin “alien” adds to that a hint of menace.

Most freighted of all is “invasive” and its variants, which hints at malevolent intentions. The late Jerry Sullivan, author of the *Field and Street* column in Chicago’s *Reader*, routinely referred to European buckthorn as “a nasty alien shrub.” Stevens called it “the number one scourge, ecologically, of the North Branch preserve sites.” Native plants, he added, “had no chance in the face of this invasion.”

Reading such complaints can sometimes be like listening to a speech by Pat Buchanan on immigration policy. There is an unmistakable echo of nativism of the social, human kind (no doubt unconscious) when non-native plant species are described. Native plant species such as dogwood and hawthorns also are invasive on disturbed ground, but it is the plants of foreign origin that excite the direst rhetoric. Here and there, one even picks up hints of the ancient fear of miscegenation; Peattie, in his 1938 chronicle, *A Prairie Grove*, equated the immigrant with the sexual despoiler

when he describes “virgin prairie ... unsullied by a single foreign weed.” Thus does biologist James Brown (quoted by author Stephen Budiansky in *Nature’s Keepers*) liken the detestation of exotic plant species to “irrational xenophobia” of the sort that stems from people’s inherent fear and intolerance of foreign races, cultures and religions.

Might there be a displaced anxiety behind the rhetoric? The ecological dilemma faced in the Chicago

area’s forest preserves in the 1970s was very similar to the social dilemma that has confronted Chicago since it became a city of immigrants in the latter 1800s. Stevens at one point refers to weedy species that had taken over whole swaths of the forest preserves as “opportunistic species that run riot in disturbed ground.” No ground was more disturbed than Chicago while a 19th century mercantile center was being torn down and a modern industrial city was taking its place. In 1938, Peattie wrote with an almost audible relief that the city of Chicago’s “great commercial destiny” never took root in his little patch of prairie, with the happy result that he did not have “three million neighbors, most of them Italians, Swedes, Poles, Jews, Germans, Hungarians, Czechs and Negroes.” Immigrants are fine in their place, but that place isn’t in the green suburbs.

A nature writer of more recent vintage, Peter Friederici, took up the issue in *The Suburban Wild*, his 1999 book about Lake County. “Without concerted control efforts,” he wrote, “these opportunistic plants and animals may wipe out many native species that have evolved ... in conjunction with particular places.” He could be reprising the immigration debate that began in Chicago a century ago and never quite ended. The solution proposed by many — to throw a fence around the United States to keep the newcomers out — is the same solution



preferred for decades by nature-lovers who sought to preserve native landscapes by isolating them in nature preserves.

Neither approach worked. In the past 30 years, prairie and savanna restorationists have mastered a third approach — aggressively intervening in nature's processes to restore not a pristine ecosystem but the process by which ecosystems themselves adapt and evolve. The project, which aims to restore tens of thousands of acres, is benign in intent, but, as less adept gardeners have learned in Iraq, rebuilding even a degraded community often means a resort to violence. The first step toward restoration is a biological version of ethnic cleansing, during which interlopers such as European buckthorn are pulled up or chopped down, poisoned or burned so that the ground may be returned to the rightful original owners. For many volunteers whose politics tend to range from the pacifist to the really nice, this comes hard.

Such methods persuaded a faction of opinion that it is the restorationists who are the aggressive foreigners who have invaded the forest preserves. Waging war against non-natives in the public's preserves has gone down especially poorly in a city of immigrants. Friederici paid a visit to a resident of Chicago's far Northwest Side who in the 1990s was a vocal critic of eco-restoration in the Cook County forest preserves, one of which abutted her property. As she explained, the non-native trees screened her view of traffic, and as long as they were green and leafy, she didn't care whether they are native or not and didn't see why anyone else should care either. "We're all immigrants from somewhere," she told Friederici.

Immigrants from political correctness? Some of the mostly boomerish prairie restorers seem to be seeking in the forest preserves ground for ways of thinking and acting that are scorned, if not banned, by the larger society. For

*Photograph courtesy of the Glenview Park District*



*A wetland walk at The Grove leads to a sweep of restored savanna and prairie on the 124-acre property, much of it a remnant of pre-settlement landscape.*

example, ambivalence about, if not antagonism toward, capitalism still reverberates with the many boomerish restorationists, but their values have been resoundingly repudiated by the new nation they gave birth to, and they feel alienated from a culture that is capitalist to the core.

The forest preserve system was a creation largely of people who recoiled from the mess their own greed had made of what had been a city in a garden. Their spiritual descendants are no less ambivalent about the effects of capitalism on the land; according to reporters and chroniclers of the movement over the years, dismay over development may

be the only thing that this very disparate bunch of amateur ecologists have in common. For restorationists of a certain age, the work is a final gesture by a fading generation that once promised to change the world for the better, but now struggles to change a few ragged patches of it.

Of course, nature itself must seek the preserves to express itself, having been denied that in any original forms elsewhere in our cities. The people who would repair nature

must go there, too, and not only because that is the field of action. Many a volunteer steward has confessed a deep emotional identification with the ecosystems they are trying to bring back to full functioning. Their words suggest that often they see nature in themselves; when they talk of a pristine nature being threatened by aggressive outsiders, therefore, are they talking to some extent about themselves? Is the plea for biodiversity a tacit plea to make space on the planet for people like prairie restorationists? □

*James Krohe Jr. is a veteran commentator on Illinois public policy issues and a frequent contributor to Illinois Issues.*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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# TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

*The debate has shifted from whether human-made global warming is real to the most cost-effective strategy for reducing greenhouse gases*

Essay by Aaron Chambers

There are two sides to every story, and each side deserves equal play. It's a basic principle of news reporting called balance, and it's designed to ensure a more complete story while minimizing complaints about bias.

But when it comes to coverage of global warming, some say balance is the problem. As one critical study puts it, balance means bias.

Scientific reports suggest there hasn't been serious debate in years within the scientific community about whether human activity helps fuel global warming. The clear consensus has long been that it does. The news media has helped perpetuate skepticism about human-made global warming by tracking down — and balancing stories with — comments from a diminishing pool of skeptics.

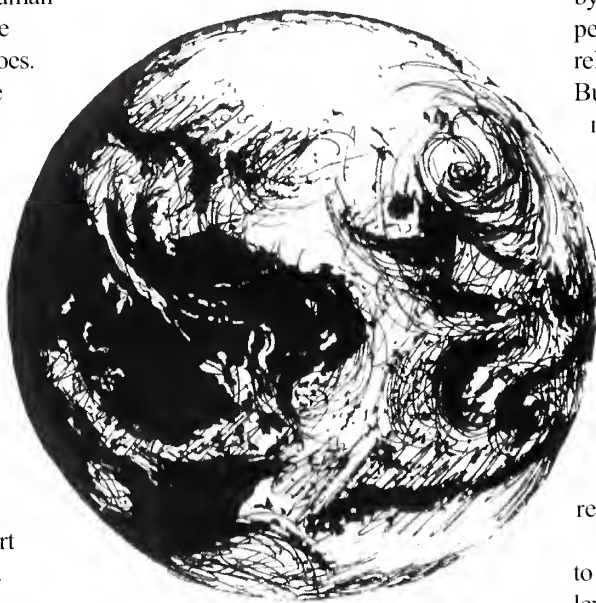
"What I sense is that while the science-beat journalists 'got it' a long time ago, it is only recently that the news-beat journalists stopped treating the science of global warming as though it was a political story," says Gavin Schmidt, a climate modeler at NASA.

"That is, they were more willing to report a new result or finding or a report as an event to be covered, rather than a political statement that needed to be balanced by an opposing voice. Some of that still happens, of course — though mainly in areas and with journalists who are new to the story. Most everyone else has noticed that the opposing voices have no credibility but plenty of agenda."

The terms of the debate fueled by — or at least facilitated by — the media have changed significantly over the past two decades. Along the way, the news media lagged behind scientific confidence that

human activity gave rise in part to global warming.

In 1988, NASA scientist James Hansen forced global warming into the news media's sphere when he told Congress that his own research indicated that humans were heating the planet, particularly through the use of carbon-packed fossil fuels. Hansen testified that he was 99 percent certain that the so-called greenhouse effect, a global warming



caused by a buildup of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, was not a natural variation but caused by human forces. Greenhouse gases block heat from exiting the atmosphere.

He ignited a storm of public debate, prompting skeptics to say the evidence of human-made global warming was inconclusive at best.

That same year, the World Meteorological

Organization and the United Nations formed the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a consortium of experts from around the world, to amass and assess scientific research relative to unnatural climate change. Still, the notion that human beings were at least in part to blame for global warming was perceived as radical among many pols and the populace.

Bill McKibben argued in his 1989 book, *The End of Nature*, that human beings were destroying their own environment by causing the greenhouse effect. He said people needed to fundamentally alter relations with nature to avert disaster. But general interest in the topic — not to mention support of his thesis — would not follow for more than a decade.

In 1995, the climate change panel said its "ability to quantify the human influence on global climate" was limited but that "the balance of evidence suggests that there is a discernible human influence on global climate." The report was the basis for the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which aimed to combat greenhouse gas emissions through agreement by industrialized nations to reduce output.

The treaty required the United States to reduce its emissions to below 1990 levels by 2012, but the United States never joined. Though President Bill Clinton's administration helped negotiate the treaty, the administration never submitted it to the U.S. Senate for ratification. In a symbolic vote, the Senate voted it down 95-0 anyway.

George W. Bush formally spiked the Kyoto agreement when he became president in 2000. The Bush Administration rejected the treaty because developing countries, including China and India, are



exempt and because compliance would adversely affect the American economy.

Much has changed indeed. Over the past two years, several books have not only promoted the human factor in global warming but also warned of dire consequences for failing to reverse the trend. In *An Inconvenient Truth*, former Vice President Al Gore takes an alarmist look at the future of an Earth with continued warming cycles. A documentary film inspired by the book, also called *An Inconvenient Truth*, won an Academy Award in February. Gore narrated the film, a slide show built on the images of melting polar ice caps and rising seawater overtaking such places as Manhattan and Florida.

While Gore told his story with savvy graphics and dramatic presentation, Elizabeth Kolbert told hers through intimate contact. Kolbert traversed the world to research *Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change*, an up-close account of how climate changes are occurring at different points around the globe. The book builds on a three-part series she wrote for *The New Yorker*.

Other recent books on the theme include *Thin Ice* by Mark Bowen and *The Weather Makers* by Tim Flannery.

Perhaps the most influential report is the latest one issued by the United Nations climate change panel. In *Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis*, the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change strengthened the language of its previous reports and made dire predictions for what is to come. It said in its fourth report, released in February, that global warming is “very likely” caused by humans. It said now that the world has begun to warm, hotter temperatures and higher sea levels “would continue for centuries,” regardless of how much people control their pollution.

“Most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations,” the panel reported, adding, “It is likely that increases in greenhouse gas concentrations alone would have caused more warming than observed because volcanic and anthropogenic aerosols have offset some warming that would otherwise have taken place.”

Over the past century, the average global

surface temperature rose by about 1 degree Fahrenheit. According to the panel, “The observed widespread warming of the atmosphere and ocean, together with ice mass loss, support the conclusion that it is extremely unlikely that global climate change of the past 50 years can be explained without external forcing, and very likely that it is not due to known natural causes alone.”

Meanwhile, the U.S. Supreme Court in April did its part to elevate dialogue about human contributions to global warming. The high court rebuked the Bush Administration for refusing to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, siding with environmentalists in its first examination of global warming. The court ruled 5-to-4 that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency improperly declined to regulate new-vehicle emissions standards to control greenhouse gases. The court forced the EPA to re-evaluate whether regulation of tailpipe emissions should include carbon dioxide.

The decision could add momentum to efforts by state and federal policymakers to curb carbon emissions, particularly with Democrats in control of Congress. The Bush Administration maintained it didn’t have the authority under the federal Clean Air Act to regulate carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases, and that it wouldn’t do so even if it did.

Severe weather such as hurricane Katrina also has intensified public dialogue about global warming. The day after Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in August 2005, the *Boston Globe* published an editorial blaming not only Katrina, but also a range of extreme weather incidents, from heavy snow in Los Angeles to high winds in Scandinavia and lethal heat in Arizona to drought in the Midwest, on global warming. Its author, Ross Gelbspan, a former *Globe* staffer and environmental activist, said many researchers believe the planet has already entered “a period of irreversible runaway climate change.”

The examples of extreme weather have not been tied definitively to global warming. But it appeared that Gelbspan intended for his righteous tone to topple widespread and longstanding skepticism about human influence on global warming — and reluctance to accept that potential disaster may follow.

“Against this background, the ignorance

of the American public about global warming stands out as an indictment of the U.S. media,” he wrote. “When the U.S. press has bothered to cover the subject of global warming, it has focused almost exclusively on its political and diplomatic aspects and not on what the warming is doing to our agriculture, water supplies, plant and animal life, public health, and weather.”

He added that, “For years, the fossil fuel industry has lobbied the media to accord the same weight to a handful of global warming skeptics that it accords the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s more than 2,000 scientists from 100 countries reporting to the United Nations.”

In March, Hansen, the NASA scientist, complained to Congress that the White House has since 1989 — the year after his testimony on the relationship between human activity and global warming prompted a media frenzy — increased censorship of his remarks on the matter. He said White House review and editing now appeared to be an “accepted practice.”

“The effect of the filtering of climate change science during the current administration has been to make the reality of climate change less certain than the facts indicate and to reduce concern about the relation of climate change to human-made greenhouse gas emissions,” he said, according to a *Congressional Quarterly* transcript.

But by May, even the nation’s most powerful skeptic had come around. On the eve of a major international summit, President Bush proposed that the United States and other nations that produce most of the greenhouse gases responsible for global warming set long-term goals for reduced emissions. Under his proposal, each country would establish its own emissions target and plan for reducing emissions over the next one or two decades. Compliance would be voluntary.

Over the past year, nearly 20 years after Hansen’s watershed testimony, the Bush Administration acknowledged that global warming is thanks, at least in part, to human beings. The subject is center stage in the race for the White House: Candidates for president, particularly the Democrats, are debating the best way to address this.

Jerry Mahlman, a scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research, says “the still-accelerating

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## **Critics dismissed**

### **An Inconvenient Truth**

#### **as a politically driven statement.**

understanding that human-caused global warming is a very real concern” has compelled “the science writing culture” to hone in on notions of human-made global warming.

“Most of the science-writing press has already taken this mega-reporting challenge very seriously, remarkably so in the past year or so,” he says. “This transformation of the understanding of science writers in the press has been energized by their many efforts to get ‘the real story about global warming’ from the world-wide climate science community.”

Last September, the *Economist* published an exhaustive multipart survey of global warming. After probing scientific data and potential implications for world economies, the magazine concluded “that although the science remains uncertain, the chances of serious consequences are high enough to make it worth spending the (not exorbitant) sums needed to try to mitigate climate change.”

Much of the debate has shifted away from whether human-made global warming is real to what is the most cost-effective strategy for reducing greenhouse gases. Doug Scott, director of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, believes that bodes well for policy change. Like California and a few other states, Illinois — impatient with a lack of action by the feds — is examining how to get out ahead of global warming.

“If you’ve got more attention being paid to it nationally, and you couple that with polls where people are saying they believe it exists and that something needs to be done, then you’ve got all the ingredients to have some fairly dramatic policy changes,” Scott says. “And that’s happening in the states and now the federal government, too.”

Last October, Gov. Rod Blagojevich convened a panel to study how best to reduce carbon emissions in Illinois. Scott, the commission’s chairman, says the panel

should report its recommendations back to the governor this summer.

“Here in Illinois, in terms of the recommendations we’re going to make to the governor, we’re not debating whether global warming exists or whether man-made factors are helping to cause it or make it worse,” Scott says. “What we’re debating are strategies to meet the targets that the governor set for us. That’s a completely different debate.”

Scott does not detect a change in media perceptions of global warming. However, he says it’s clear the media are paying far more attention to the issue.

In March, a Gallup poll found that the percentage of Americans “highly concerned” about global warming had increased five points to 41 percent from 36 percent in March 2006. The heightened interest built on a 10-point increase that occurred between 2004 and 2006. Gallup said the percentage of Americans now “worried a great deal about global warming” is roughly tied with the 40 percent recorded in April 2000.

The nation’s most high-profile skeptic, other than the president himself, may be science fiction writer Michael Crichton, who authored *Jurassic Park* and created the hit television drama *E.R.* In 2004, Crichton’s novel *State of Fear* mocked conventional wisdom that humans are to blame for global warming.

On *The Charlie Rose Show* in February, Crichton accepted that global warming is occurring and that human beings are contributing to it, but he argued gloom and doom scenarios perpetuated by the likes of Gore are overblown. He insisted nobody knows how fast devastation might occur.

“You can’t get agreement on almost anything, as far as I can tell,” Crichton said. “I mean, you can bring in five guys to talk about whether Antarctica, the core of Antarctica, is getting colder or not. Everybody agrees the peninsula, which is 2 percent of the mass, is getting warmer. And, you know, they’ll argue and argue and argue, and you’ll come away after an hour saying, ‘I don’t know what the answer is.’ And that’s the reality. Nobody really knows that.”

Crichton disputed the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, saying it was compiled by bureaucrats and driven by “essentially philosophical positions, emotional

positions” divorced from data.

“So I understand that these ideas can take hold,” he said. “And I understand that, generally speaking, the more extreme elements will push that, and the media is not interested in a balanced perspective.”

Crichton includes with his book a detailed description of his own position on the science of global warming. He ends with this: “Everybody has an agenda. Except me.”

Still, hardened skeptics seem to have reserved most of their rhetorical grenades for Gore, a Democrat and former presidential contender who is a favorite target of conservatives. This spring, Gore starred in a popular cartoon spoofing his environmental campaign. The two-minute clip, called *Al Gore’s Penguin Army* and posted on YouTube, showed Gore as a villain boring penguins to sleep, then hypnotizing them, while blaming the Middle East conflict, David Spade’s brief romance with Heather Locklear and Lindsay Lohan’s “skinny” on global warming.

News reports linked the video’s anonymous producer to a Washington public relations and lobbying firm whose clients include oil company ExxonMobil Corp. Meanwhile, conservative talking heads and right-leaning Web sites such as the *Drudge Report* clamored to promote news reports casting Gore as an energy hog for occupying an electricity-guzzling mansion in Nashville.

Critics dismissed *An Inconvenient Truth* as a politically driven statement. In its May edition, *Vanity Fair* profiled Myron Ebell, a media specialist with a Washington think tank called the Competitive Enterprise Institute, and other skeptics of global warming. The story noted that many of these skeptics are bankrolled, at least indirectly, by ExxonMobil.

“The case for global warming has grown all but irrefutable, yet the skeptics have enjoyed enormous influence, for the audience that matters most to them occupies the White House,” the story concluded. “Eagerly, their papers have been snatched up by the Bush Administration as rationales for all manner of public policy, from striking down the Kyoto Protocol to blocking any cap on carbon dioxide emissions.”

During an interview with the magazine, Ebell scoffed at Hansen, the NASA



scientist, for suggesting that global warming is forcing animals like polar bears to migrate from their own habitats.

“James Hansen was not trained as a climate scientist,” he said. “He was trained as an astronomer. He’s a physicist. His dissertation was on the atmosphere of Venus, and he has applied what he’s learned in physics and in astronomy to become a climate scientist, but you know from him talking about species’ going north, he knows nothing about biology.”

Ebell referred *Vanity Fair* to a recent study by David Legates, another skeptic, which declared “only two of the world’s 20 polar-bear populations are decreasing. Most of the others are stable; two are growing.” The magazine noted ExxonMobil in 2005 partially funded global-warming-denial research by Legates’ firm.

Skeptics are aided in their rhetoric by political consultant and wordsmith Frank Luntz, who is credited with encouraging Republicans to refer to the federal estate tax as the “death tax” — thereby inflaming opposition. Luntz also is credited with popularizing use of the term “climate change” in place of “global warming.”

“People react to global warming in a slightly different way than climate change,” Luntz said on the public radio show *Fresh Air* in January. “Climate change creates less hysteria. Global warming is more intense. It’s more emotional. It’s quite frankly more impactful. Climate change is more thoughtful, more reasonable. Global warming causes people to divide.”

In *An Inconvenient Truth*, Gore cited a study that found the “reporters and editors at four of the nation’s top newspapers adhered to the journalistic norm of balance at the expense of accurately reporting scientific understanding of the human contributions to global warming.” The study, from the University of California at Santa Cruz, *Balance as Bias: Global Warming and the U.S. Prestige Press*, covered 636 articles concerning human contributions to warming published from 1988 to 2002 in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post*. It found that 52.7 percent of the stories gave “roughly equal attention” to the views that humans contribute to global warming and that climate change is exclusively the result of natural fluctuations; 35.3 percent

emphasized the role of humans while presenting both sides of the debate; 6.2 percent emphasized the dubious nature of the claim that anthropogenic global warming exists; and 5.8 percent contained exclusive coverage of human contributions to temperature increases.

By contrast, Gore’s book reported that of 928 “peer-reviewed articles dealing with ‘climate change’ published in scientific journals” over the previous decade, not 1 percent expressed “doubt as to the cause of global warming.”

Maxwell Boykoff, co-author of the University of California study, concluded that by granting equal weight to the opposing views, “these newspapers significantly downplayed scientific understanding of the role humans play in global warming.”

“We respect the need to represent multiple viewpoints, but when generally agreed-upon scientific findings are presented side-by-side with the viewpoints of a handful of skeptics, readers are poorly served,” he wrote. “In this case, it contributed to public confusion and opened the door to political maneuvering.”

U.S. Sen. James Inhofe, an Oklahoma Republican who until the Democratic takeover of Congress in January was chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, famously called the threat of catastrophic global warming the “greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the American people.”

Hansen, the NASA scientist, wrote an essay for *The New York Review of Books* last July in which he wondered why the scientists and political forces that controlled the threat to the ozone layer were “now failing miserably to deal with the global warming crisis.”

“Scientists present the facts about climate change clinically, failing to stress that business-as-usual will transform the planet,” he wrote. “The press and television, despite an overwhelming scientific consensus concerning global warming, give equal time to fringe ‘contrarians’ supported by the fossil fuel industry. Special interest groups mount effective disinformation campaigns to sow doubt about the reality of global warming. The government appears to be strongly influenced by special interests, or otherwise confused and distracted, and it has failed to provide leadership.

The public is understandably confused or uninterested.”

Andrew Revkin, the *New York Times* science correspondent, told the public radio show *On the Media* last December that the news media has made three mistakes in its coverage. First, the media kept “saying on the one hand/on the other hand, even as the scientific consensus powerfully built around the basic idea — more CO<sub>2</sub>, warmer world.” Second, it viewed developments through the prism of breaking news norms and asked, “Didn’t we already write about global warming back in 1988?” Third, it incorrectly believed there is consensus on every aspect of global warming “now that we got over the hurdle of understanding that there really is a consensus on the main idea.”

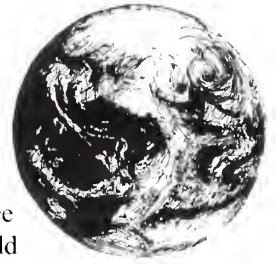
“Unfortunately, the things that matter most to people, like how is this going to affect Chicago, or what’s going to happen with Greenland’s ice — how fast are sea levels going to rise — there’s a lot of uncertainty on those aspects of it,” he said. “And there you really do have legitimate kinds of on the one hand/on the other hand arguments.”

At the cable Weather Channel, climate expert Heidi Cullen says she has accepted it’s not possible to escape the politics of global warming. However, she says she works to stay rooted in the science because the “evidence is overwhelming and good science ultimately informs good policy.”

“The bottom line is global warming is political. After all, scientists are saying we need [to] overhaul our entire energy infrastructure to protect the planet. Not a small request,” she wrote on her Weather Channel blog in April.

“At the end of the day, there will always be politics,” she wrote. “But my hope is that we, as a country, will shift the discussion away from politics and toward proactive policies. Policies based on good science, cutting edge technology, economic strength, national security and energy independence. After all, the Stone Age didn’t end because we ran out of stones.” □

Aaron Chambers covers the Statehouse for the Rockford Register Star.



# DEATH BY A THOUSAND STRAWS

*In the long history of human abuse of the Great Lakes watershed, there has proven to be just one effective weapon*

Essay by Robert Kuhn McGregor

## THE GREAT LAKES WATER WARS

Peter Annin

Washington, Covelo, London

2006

Mark Twain is supposed to have observed that the coldest winter he ever spent was a summer in Duluth, Minn. Anyone so much as daydreaming about northern Minnesota knows precisely what he was saying — Lake Superior was the one place to go to escape the intolerable heat of a July in the lower Midwest.

I have spent a few pleasantly chilly summer days in Duluth myself. But Samuel Clemens died almost a century ago, and changes come eventually to all places. Time was, the city's residents did not so much as own a pair of bermudas, but shorts and T-shirts are the standard fashion now from late May to early September. Duluth has gone hot, with temperatures sometimes approaching 100 degrees, the air as still and stifling as St. Louis in August.

Climate change? This is just the sort of anecdotal evidence climatologists warn against, with good reason. A few tropical days in pine tree country does not point to global warming. That is why it is so much more important to attend to a quieter, but far more ominous scientific fact: Lake Superior itself is growing warmer.

The near-freezing chill of Superior's waters is legendary. The first steel ship to sail the Great Lake cracked and broke in two — water temperatures made the steel too brittle to hold together. Superior never gives up her dead because the

temperatures prevent floating. My daughter, 11 at the time, once swam in Superior for half an hour; we spent the rest of the afternoon trying to thaw her out. The water is cold. Or at least it used to be.

Surely, you can still die of hypothermia swimming in Lake Superior if you wish, but it will be a bit more of a challenge. Recent reports indicate that average lake temperatures have risen by three to four degrees over the past decade — into the higher 30s. This still sounds fearsomely cold (and it is), but consider for a moment the sheer volume of Lake Superior, the amount of additional annual heat necessary to raise the average temperature by just a single degree. Here, I think, we have some irrefutable evidence of climate change, of the colder places of the Earth growing warmer.

There may be a point to arguing in other contexts just why this is occurring, but it need not be a part of the discussion here. The fact that a warming Superior will severely impact weather patterns, influence navigation, alter habitats and affect the supply of a fundamental source of fresh water is more than enough to think about. Climate change is occurring, and we should at least try to mitigate the consequences, rather than blundering along, praying that our blind faith in an unchanging natural world is well founded.

But climate change is not what this essay is about, really. The fact that

Superior is warming significantly is a mind-bending fact, yet it is far from posing the most significant dangers to the Great Lakes basin. The people who spend a lot of their time thinking about the Great Lakes consider the warming business to be nothing more than a wild card in the intricate game of poker people are playing with all that water. Everyone agrees that climate change will affect the supply of water to the lakes. Some models suggest surface levels may drop by as much as four feet, but one or two models even suggest the lakes may gain a foot. No, the question is not how much new water the lakes will receive from the sky. The real question is what will happen to whatever water is there.

The Great Lakes Basin is surrounded with thirsty places prepared to construct long straws to siphon off the water. Florida and Georgia, blessed with swamp drainage projects to improve water management, are now horribly dry and fire prone. The Ogallala Aquifer continues to drain, feeding irrigation systems from Texas to the Dakotas. If subsurface water levels there drop another foot, pumping costs to get the water out of the ground will become fabulously expensive. In the Southwest, thousands of new residents sprinkle new lawns, play golf on new courses, admire new fountains, all supplied by a water management system no one can possibly





***This is a satellite view of the Great Lakes in 2000. The image is from NASA Visible Earth Web site, <http://visibleearth.nasa.gov>.***

hope to sustain. We live on the cusp of a water supply crisis that climatic warming will not help — quite the opposite.

In the Midwest, we are at least blessed with the illusion of enormous water wealth. The five Great Lakes represent roughly one-fifth of the entire world's surface supply of fresh water. Anyone without a clue might think we should be laughing at this particular environmental problem — water we got. Yet that is the problem, or at the very least, a critical element in the problem. We have water, and there are lots of other folks who want it. And we cannot afford to give a drop of it away for a complex of reasons that seem to grow more complicated with each passing year.

The lakes are not so water rich as we might suppose. Mostly, the lakes derive from the melting of the last glacial advance, which ended some 12,000 years ago. A vast crack in the earth filled with meltwater that has pretty much remained there ever since, turning over very, very gradually. Only 1 percent of the entire system's water is recharged through rainfall — if people use more than 1 percent of the water, they are dipping into that 12,000-year-old, irreplaceable reserve. A little care seems to be called for.

Once upon a time, towns lying close to the Great Lakes, yet outside the basin, had little to worry about. The glaciers also left an abundance of underground

lakes and aquifers scattered through the region, more than adequate to supply the water needs of hundreds of small, deserving communities in perpetuity. Or so people thought. But the one disease common to small communities everywhere is the belief that they have to get bigger — more industry, more population, more country clubs, more shopping malls, more highway interchanges, more fast food restaurants. And water supplies got no bigger, but instead drained away.

Throughout Illinois and Wisconsin, there exist too many towns where the water has gone sour, become burdened with radiation or just plain disappeared. The mavens who just had to grow their economies now look to the Great Lakes with thirsty eyes. How easy it would be to hook up to the next community over, tap into their supply of seemingly limitless Lake Michigan. The greatest danger to the Great Lakes is not the mammoth pipe sent westward to the Dakotas, but the hundreds of potential pipes of a few miles each, draining away the water through countless small holes in the system.

As water management developed during the 20th century, the boundary for Great Lakes usage came to be defined by the drainage system. If rainfall striking the land drained into the lakes or a tributary, that land was considered eligible to use lake water. Otherwise, no. That definition has become essential as the eight Great Lakes states and two

Canadian provinces struggle to kill the hopes of the Southwest, the Ogallala, the good people of Indiana who have the twin misfortune of living with bad groundwater and a stream that drains toward the Gulf of Mexico. Topography can be cruel, but at least it is definable. Too bad we cannot say the same for politics.

The largest puncture in the topographical drainage definition — the soft spot in the armor, the Achilles heel — happens to be here in Illinois. As anyone reasonably familiar with the history of the state knows, the city of Chicago in 1900 reversed the course of a tiny and sadly abused tributary to Lake Michigan called the Chicago River, sending its waters away from the lake and into the Mississippi River. By the standards of the last gasp of the 19th century, the diversion made a lot of sense. The loss of Lake Michigan water was scarcely notable, the gains for sanitation almost immeasurable. It is never a good idea to dump your raw sewage into the same body of water you employ for your fresh water, and the industrial effluents Gary, Ind., contributed certainly did not help to keep the water pure.

The reversal had nothing to do with the movement of water; the goal was to flush away what the water contained, up to and including dead animal carcasses. With that kind of stuff carried away toward St. Louis and New Orleans, Chicago could breathe (and drink) a little easier.



That was in 1900. A century later, what is at issue is not the sewage removal, but water diversion. The Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal does drain significant amounts of water out of Lake Michigan and stands as one of the very few human-constructed artifices to do so. Any attempt to confine movement of Great Lakes water to the basin must either make an exception of the Chicago River or try to shut it down. Various entities did attempt the latter approach a few times over the course of the 20th

century, with limited success. As mandated in a solution brokered by the federal government, Chicago currently maintains the right to draw water into the canal at the carefully monitored rate of 3,200 cubic feet per second (cfs). In return, the city must maintain the integrity of what had once been a very leaky water supply system and return as much water to the lake as possible. The feds even determined the amount of water debt Chicago had to pay back to Lake Michigan.

*Photograph courtesy of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes National Program office*



*Lake Michigan Beach, Leland, Michigan*

Because of some very high water levels in the last years of the 20th century, that debt is paid in full. Chicago now has free and legal access to 3,200 cfs of water, much more than the city's thirsty citizens need. So guess what is happening. Chicago is sharing its net water surplus with the sprawling suburbs west of town — all of them *outside* the Great Lakes basin. Once upon a time, these villages and burghs possessed their own water supplies, drawn from deep wells and such. But suburban flight swelled their sizes to a point overwhelming local resources, while the residents, many of them well off, demanded such visible signs of opulence as otherwise pointless yet very large fish ponds in the center of their subdivisions. These people needed water and Lake Michigan was right there. Chicago already had all the pipes, all the pumps. All that was required was a mile or two of connection to bring Lake Michigan straight to the tap.

Chicago was, and continues to be, quite willing to supply these suburbs, firmly believing that the water made available to them by the feds will remain constant forever. Which goes to show how easy it is to be generous with resources that are not really yours in the first place.

What began as a small puncture in the basin, a drain designed to send dead horses to St. Louis, has now become the essential water supply for Chicago's suburbs, all of them located in the Mississippi River drainage. For the moment, Chicago can maintain this generosity without exceeding its legal take from Lake Michigan, but this presumes that water levels in the Great Lakes will remain somewhere close to what they are now. What happens when the thirst of the suburbs grows larger than the legal limit? Can Chicago deny them? Can the federal government? And what of the suburbs of Gary, of Detroit, of Cleveland, of Buffalo — places where nobody thought to dig a drainage canal back in the good old days when Great Lakes water was apparently without end?

Small towns in Wisconsin, Ohio and Indiana are already lining up, pipes ready, seeking an exception to a set of very porous rules. If you can breach a topographical boundary once, why not a



few dozen times? A few hundred? When topographical boundaries give way to politically defined boundaries — this tier of counties and no more — water lines can be extended indefinitely without any more sacrifice of such principle as exists. We will not kill the lakes by sending the water to Phoenix. We will kill the lakes ourselves, by osmosis, making tiny exceptions to reasonably defined rules. Dozens and dozens and dozens of tiny exceptions.

Remember, there is a wild card in this water game. If the climate does indeed warm as much as climatologists suspect, all those tiny communities just outside the boundaries are going to get that much drier, that much thirstier. And I don't suppose their populations will recede, either.

In a fascinating book entitled *The Great Lakes Water Wars*, Peter Annin examines the history of the legal struggles surrounding construction of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. He then goes on to analyze a few more ill-conceived plans to draw water from the Great Lakes, including an irrigation scheme to aid the already well-to-do in Michigan, and a virtual water theft in Ohio. Before going into any of these morbid tales, however, Annin takes the time to consider one of the great ecological catastrophes of all time: the almost complete destruction of the former USSR's Aral Sea.

Annin went to Kazakhstan to view the disaster for himself. And disaster it is. The Soviets diverted the Aral's major tributaries in a reasonably successful effort to increase agricultural production through irrigation. But four-fifths of the sea shrank away to nothing — a litter of disintegrating boats pepper a weedy wasteland several hours' drive from the present, and still shrinking, coastline. Where 40 feet of water stood just a half century ago, there is not a drop of seawater in sight. Can human beings kill an ecosystem? Oh, yes. With almost no thought at all.

Peter Annin likens the current threats facing the Great Lakes to the death by a thousand cuts, or a draining by a hundred straws. Both are apt. He goes on to document the efforts by bureaucrats, managers and politicians to shore up the lakes' protection, to close the legal loopholes leaking water like a sieve.

We know just how much faith to have in that.

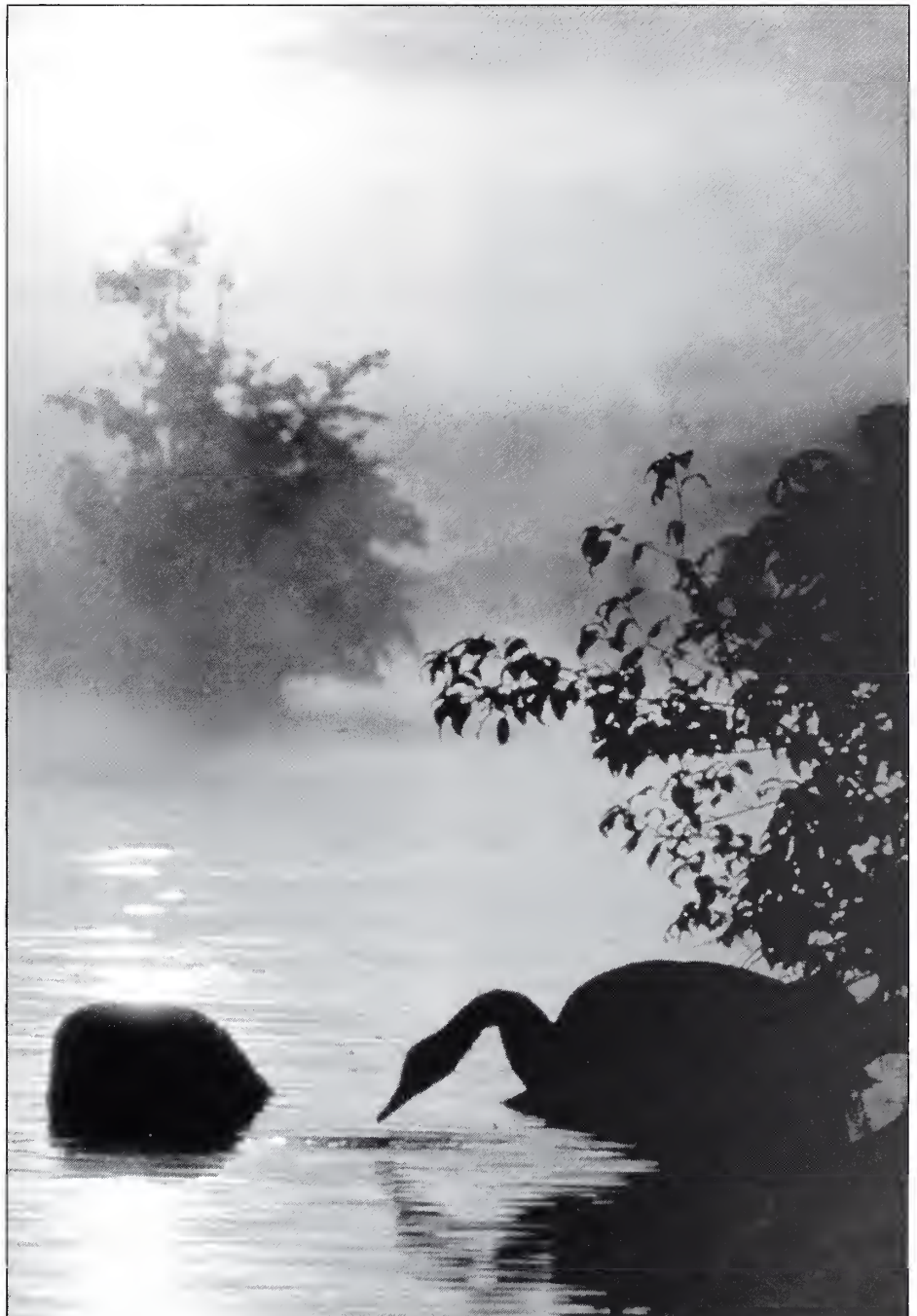
In the long history of human abuse of the Great Lakes watershed, there has proven to be just one effective weapon in opposition: public protest. It was grassroots efforts that saved Lake Erie, forced an investigation of Love Canal, cleaned up Green Bay. Votes do matter, provided they are delivered at the top of your voice. Greed and thirst are the perennials of American life, always

there, always growing. If the lakes are to live, to continue as a renewable source of fresh water, people everywhere will have to supply an emphatic countering to that insatiable greed. Just how much water are we willing to give away trying to satisfy a never-ending water lust?

Just how much bigger do we need to get? An Aral Sea's worth, perhaps? □

*Robert Kuhn McGregor, an environmental historian at the University of Illinois at Springfield, is a frequent contributor.*

*Photograph by Thomas Schneider, courtesy of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes National Program office*



*Kent Lake in Kensington Metropark in Milford, Michigan, around the Detroit area*

## Ongoing federal probe expands to another Blagojevich supporter

**Ali Ata**, former executive director of the Illinois Finance Authority, joined **Antoin "Tony" Rezko** as a co-defendant in an ongoing federal investigation into possible kickback schemes and public corruption within some state panels. Rezko, a Wilmette resident and political fundraiser for Gov. Rod Blagojevich, was indicted last fall. Both Ata and Rezko pleaded not guilty.

The federal grand jury indictment says Ata helped Rezko and an unnamed investor fraudulently borrow \$10 million to buy two pizza franchises in Chicago and Wisconsin. Ata signed a letter on Illinois Finance Authority letterhead falsely stating the board of directors reviewed an application for the loan and recommended approval, the indictment says.

Ata, a Lemont resident, was appointed to the board in January 2004.

## A corruption conviction costs a former governor

A Cook County circuit court judge ruled that former Gov. **George Ryan** will not receive \$197,000 a year in state pension benefits because of his public corruption conviction last fall. The ruling affirms a decision by the General Assembly Retirement System Board denying Ryan's pension for all 35 years of his public service, including the benefits accrued before the crimes took place. The conviction covers actions between 1991 and 2003, while Ryan was secretary of state and governor.

Before that, Ryan served eight years as lieutenant governor with then-Gov. James Thompson and 10 years in the Illinois House. He also accrued public pension benefits while serving on the Kankakee County Board.

The Kankakee Republican remains free while his defense team, led by Thompson, appeals the six-and-a-half-year prison sentence. His attorneys also are appealing the pension ruling.

## State hiring case drags

Two fired state employees are still awaiting a decision on whether they can get their jobs back. A Sangamon County judge halted the case against **Dawn DeFraties** and **Michael Casey** to study whether the Illinois Civil Service Commission lost its authority to hear more testimony after the state panel took too long to make a decision based on the first round of evidence, according to DeFraties and Casey's attorney, Carl Draper.

DeFraties and Casey previously worked for the state administrative agency Central Management Services and were fired in April 2006 by Gov. Rod Blagojevich for allegedly giving favorable treatment to politically connected applicants for state jobs.

Hearings on the case started and stopped over a 12-month period. In May, Administrative Law Judge **Anthony Dos Santos** issued a report to the commission that recommended that DeFraties and Casey be suspended for two weeks but remain in their jobs. The Civil Service Commission ordered the case back to the judge to collect new evidence from each party in early June.

Draper filed suit in Sangamon County June 4, arguing the commission missed the deadline for ruling in the case. He says because the case dragged out for a year and because the commission missed a 60-day deadline for making a decision after all transcripts were filed, state law allows DeFraties and Casey to be reinstated to their previous jobs with full compensation of salaries and benefits lost during the year they were out of work.

## Illinois expert will help make decisions about museums nationwide

**Bonnie Styles**, the first woman to lead the 128-year-old Illinois State Museum, was appointed to the Accreditation Commission of the American Association of Museums. The volunteer panel of industry experts decides whether museums of all types and sizes get the seal of approval that brings national recognition. Accreditation recognizes focused missions, educational goals, financial stability, leadership and public accountability.



*Bonnie Styles*

## Big people on campus

Texas native **Fernando Treviño**, who has an extensive background in health administration at the national and international levels, starts as Southern Illinois University's chancellor of the Carbondale campus this month. He was selected from among four finalists by university President **Glenn Poshard**, who chose not to renew former chancellor **Walter Wendler**'s contract in November 2006. Treviño replaces **John Dunn**, who stepped in as interim chancellor.

Treviño comes to Illinois from the University of North Texas in Fort Worth, where he was dean of the School of Public Health and professor of health management and policy.



*Fernando Treviño*

For updated news see the *Illinois Issues* Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>



Charles N. Wheeler III



## Illinoisans who were surveyed about the state think changes are needed

by Charles N. Wheeler III

**M**ost Illinoisans think the state is headed in the wrong direction.

Almost two-thirds believe state government has a lot or quite a bit of impact on the day-to-day lives of state residents, but three-quarters say state government can be trusted to do what is right hardly ever or only some of the time.

Nine out of 10 say changes are needed, and more than a third want big changes.

That gloomy picture emerged from the preliminary results of a survey of public opinion about state government and the role of citizens, conducted by the Survey Research Office within the Center for State Policy and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Things could be worse, of course. National surveys taken at roughly the same time found even fewer people seeing things going in the right direction nationally. Only 25 percent of those surveyed shared that view in a mid-May AP-Ipsos poll, while an NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll a few weeks later found 68 percent believing things were off on the wrong track. Pollsters said the bleak national outlook reflected widespread discontent with the war in Iraq and President George W. Bush.

The survey of 465 Illinois residents was conducted over a month-long period from mid-May to mid-June, just as the Illinois General Assembly's spring session blundered into overtime when

*Things could be worse,  
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Gov. Rod Blagojevich and the Democrat-controlled legislature could not agree on a budget for the fiscal year starting July 1. The survey's margin of error is plus-or-minus 5 percent, at a 95 percent confidence level.

The Illinois poll did not ask detailed questions about the fiscal standoff, although one question covered awareness of the governor's proposed gross receipts tax, a \$7 billion tax hike to bankroll health care and education. Most of those polled said they had heard the governor proposed a new tax, but only 24 percent could identify what it was.

While Blagojevich and Democratic legislative leaders — Senate President Emil Jones Jr. and House Speaker Michael Madigan, both Chicago Democrats — engaged in mutual finger-pointing, the UIS poll found respondents generally displeased with everyone's performance.

Citizens gave slightly higher ratings

to Blagojevich — one-third graded his performance A or B, while only 22 percent gave similar high grades to the legislature — but most viewed all players as mediocre at best, with 31 percent giving D or F to the governor and 29 percent grading lawmakers' performance as "poor" or "fail."

State government as an entity did not fare much better, receiving generally lackluster grades for being representative of the state's diversity, for being responsive to residents' needs and for being open in its processes and decision-making. Respondents were especially critical in the latter category, with only 17 percent rating Illinois good or better, while 43 percent said the state did poorly or failed altogether in openness.

Respondents also were tough on themselves. More than four out of five of those surveyed said they thought citizens should participate actively in politics by keeping informed and by voting, rather than leaving the arena to professional politicians and political parties. But only 27 percent rated their own performance as a citizen as excellent or good, while 23 percent gave themselves Ds or Fs. Forty-eight percent opted for Cs — "average." While three-quarters said they voted in 2006, only 43 percent said they followed what's been going on in state government this year fairly or very closely.

Doing a mediocre job of staying informed might account for a couple of

responses that Survey Research Office Director Richard Schuldt did not expect.

"The two things I was most surprised about were, first, the fact that most people thought that we had a progressive income tax rather than a flat rate tax," Schuldt says, "and secondarily, most thought there are campaign limits on contributions. Here are two cases where there are misperceptions out there."

Indeed, 62 percent said those with bigger incomes pay a higher rate, while 53 percent said there are limits on how much individuals and groups can contribute to candidates.

Actually, Illinois has a flat-rate income tax, with individuals assessed 3 percent regardless of income level. And anyone may contribute any amount to any state or local candidate, which has led to skyrocketing campaign spending. In fact, three-quarters of those surveyed agreed that campaign costs discouraged candidates that might represent their interests from seeking office.

Additionally, almost half — 49 percent — mistakenly believed Illinois

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***Whatever misgivings Illinois citizens might entertain about the current crop of public servants, they appear not to have abandoned hope for a brighter future.***

to be a high-tax state, considering all taxes paid to state and local governments. Only 5 percent knew that Illinois generally is considered a low-tax state, when tax burden is measured as a percentage of income.

However, 74 percent knew that public schools here get most of their money from local property taxes rather than state income or sales taxes, a reflection perhaps of the decades-long public campaign to have the state assume a greater role in education funding.

What to make of the results, which

Schuldt presented last month at a forum on state government and citizen participation at UIS?

Clearly, folks are unhappy about things in Springfield, but they are not despairing. They may not be overwhelmed by the performance of the professional politicians, but they also recognize that the public shares some of the blame. People need to stay informed, to vote, to become active politically. There's too much at stake to allow professional politicians to treat government as their private preserve, most respondents indicated.

Perhaps most encouraging, fully 70 percent said that they would encourage a son or daughter thinking about a career in state government to pursue it. Whatever misgivings Illinois citizens might entertain about the current crop of public servants, they appear not to have abandoned hope for a brighter future. □

*Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.*

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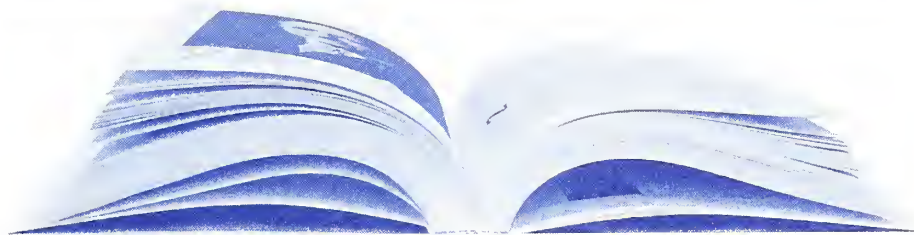
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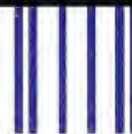
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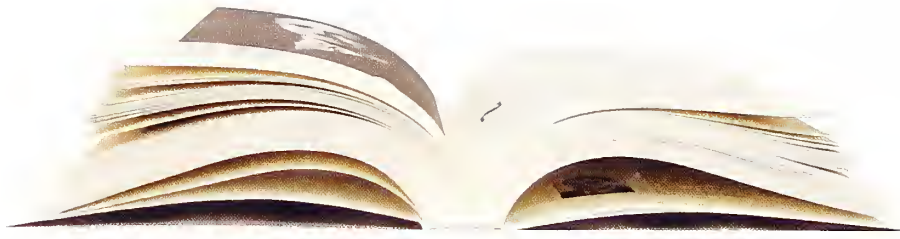


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